



WHY AMERICA BACKS ISRAEL

SOPHIE SQUIRE EXPLAINS >>Pages 14&15



More than a million households could face homelessness

TORIES END EVICTION BAN >>Page 3

Socialist Worker

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WEDDING INSULT AMID VIRUS HORROR

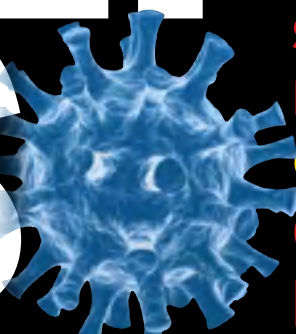


JOHNSON'S DEADLY VOWS

● **For the richer against the poorer**

● **In your sickness and my wealth**

● **Till 150,000 deaths do us part**



UBER

Cab fight continues as union wins deal

TAXI SERVICE Uber has struck a recognition deal with the GMB union.

A collective bargaining agreement is a positive step for workers. But bosses often concede deals with one union to avoid pressure from others.

Some unions are pointing out that much more must be done to protect workers.

>>Page 7

APARTHEID



Israel terrorises Palestinians after revolt

ISRAELI STATE forces are driving through a wave of repression in a bid to suffocate Palestinian resistance.

It comes as Israeli politicians conspire to kick out prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the wake of the Palestinian revolt.

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UNITE

'It's time to get back to the workplaces'

SHARON GRAHAM, a candidate for general secretary of the Unite union, has received enough nominations to be on the ballot paper.

She writes in this week's Socialist Worker about why she is standing for election.

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

‘When is the government going to have the guts to stop the BBC criminalising people for not paying the licence fee which is no better than the poll tax?’

Sir Edward Leigh MP who oddly in 1988 was rather insistent that people went to jail for not paying the poll tax

‘Entirely employee-led’

Pizza Express explains why its decision to cut the tips waiters get was in workers’ own interest

‘She’s had to put up with accusations and smears, and she has come through it all with such dignity’

A Friend of Carrie Johnson on the ‘triumph’ of her wedding to Boris Johnson

‘The prime minister’s girlfriend was trying to appoint her friends to particular jobs’

Allegation from Dominic Cummings, which the wedding wasn’t a distraction from



Vaccine billionaires are cashing in on Covid crisis

PROFITING FROM the Covid-19 vaccine has directly created at least nine new billionaires with a combined wealth of nearly £14 billion.

That would be enough to fully vaccinate people all 780 million people in the “low-income countries” 1.3 times over.

A report from The People’s Vaccine Alliance compiled data from the Forbes Rich list to assess who has benefitted from the pandemic.

The biggest winners were the bosses of major pharmaceutical companies, who have been able to monopolise vaccine production.

The CEO of US pharmaceutical company Moderna, Stephane Bancel, is now worth £3.8 billion and its chairman, Nour Afeyan, has stacked up £1.3 billion.

Robert Langer, a scientist and founding investor in Moderna, has become a billionaire. And Timothy Springer, an immunologist and founding investor in Moderna now



Stephane Bancel

has £1.5 billion. Juan Lopez-Belmonte, chairman of Rovi, also benefited from a deal with Moderna for the packaging and manufacture of its vaccine. He is now worth around £1.2 billion.

It is often claimed that such fortunes are a reward for commercial risk and brilliant corporate research.

But an article in Scientific American magazine details how public funding was key to virtually all vaccine breakthroughs.

It shows how nearly all the Covid-19

vaccines are based on a design developed with public funding by Dr Barney Graham, then at Vanderbilt University.

The magazine adds, “Basic research conducted by Graham and others at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and federally funded academic laboratories has been the essential ingredient.

“The government has poured an additional \$10.5 billion (£7.4 billion) into vaccine companies since the pandemic began to accelerate the delivery of their products.

“The Moderna vaccine emerged directly out of a partnership between Moderna and Graham’s NIH laboratory.”

The CEO of BioNtech, Ugur Sahin, whose company jointly produced the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has also amassed £2.8 billion. This discovery also used public funding.

In addition, eight existing pharma billionaires have seen their combined wealth increase by more than £22.7 billion. This would be enough to fully vaccinate everyone in India.

PETER PHILLIPS’S status as the Queen’s grandson appears to have given him an advantage in medical equipment to ward off Covid-19. Phillips was fed down the “VIP lane” for PPE procurement at the height of the pandemic last year.

At the time of his referral in March, he was acting on behalf of a medical company he had not yet formally founded. XF Medical has since become a government-listed supplier of Covid-related goods. Phillips has no medical background or qualifications.

Peter Phillips

THE successor to the Royal Yacht Britannia does not have a name. Tory MPs want to name it after the Duke of Edinburgh. It will cost £200 million. Boris Johnson said, “This new national flagship will be the first vessel of its kind in the world, reflecting the UK’s burgeoning status as a great, independent maritime trading nation.” BoatyMcCorruptface?

Priti Patel was lobbying over dodgy PPE deals

HOME secretary Priti Patel faces fresh questions over lobbying to help her former adviser land multimillion pound PPE deals.

Leaked documents show Patel pressed ministers and officials who intervened to give a previously unreported £28.8 million contract to a firm represented by Samir Jassal.

Her second intervention to help Jassal came days after she tried to secure a separate £20 million deal for the same firm, Pharmaceuticals Direct Limited (PDL) in an alleged “glaring and flagrant” breach of the ministerial code. The

documents relating to the new contract also show how No.10 head of policy Munira Mirza introduced procurement officials to the company’s sales chief, Surbjit Shergill.

The £28.8 million deal for surgical masks was awarded to PDL without competition six days after Patel contacted procurement officials.

Priti Patel

Will anyone do my decorating for me?

IT COULD happen to any of us. Someone pays for nearly £60,000 of work on your home, but you don’t ask who or why.

Lord Geidt, the prime minister’s adviser on standards, says Boris Johnson acted “unwisely” by not being more “rigorous” in finding out who had funded refurbishment work on the Downing Street flat.

A Tory donor had paid an invoice for some of the costs. The report did not say how much former Conservative vice-chairman Lord Brownlow had put up, but it was £58,000.

Lord Geidt found “no evidence” that

Lord Brownlow had told Johnson “he had personally settled” costs.

And, when Lord Brownlow informed government officials about the money, they had not “acted on this information to the extent of informing the prime minister”, it said.

Meanwhile health secretary Matt Hancock committed a “minor breach” of the ministerial code when a coronavirus contract was awarded to his sister’s company in which he had shareholdings, another Lord Geidt report found.

He said the conflict of interest was “in no way deliberate”.

No rush for benefits for the dying

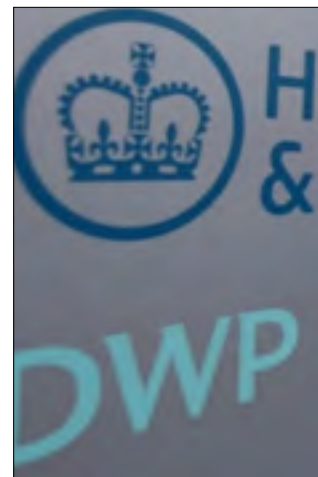
CAMPAIGNERS, doctors and carers have attacked the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) over delays to a pledged overhaul to benefits rules for those with a terminal illness.

Under the current system, only those with six months or less to live are able to have their benefits claims fast-tracked.

Others face reviews every three years even if they have been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

Earlier this month DWP minister Justin Tomlinson claimed the review had been “completed.” But he failed to set out any of the proposed changes or a date for when they will be published.

Speaking to PoliticsHome, Susie Rabin, head of policy and campaigns at the Motor Neurone Disease Association, said urgent



action was needed to fix the “really inappropriate” scheme.

Rabin added that people with Motor Neurone Disease had faced considerable struggles with the system due to the unpredictable and often fast-moving progression of the disease.

She said, “I do know of carers who have had to fill in those 70-page forms that have come to me and said, this is ridiculous, there is no point where I can just say he is completely paralysed and ventilated and can only move his eyes.

“I know of people who are quite near the end of life who have been told their benefits will stop unless they re-apply.”

Ministers also failed to hit a deadline set by the Commons work and pensions committee who had called for the review to be published by the end of November 2020.

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End to the eviction ban will mean more misery

by ISABEL RINGROSE

THE BAN on home evictions was set to be lifted in England on Tuesday, with hundreds of thousands of people facing the threat of homelessness.

It is another sign that the government is unwinding concessions it was forced into during the lockdowns.

Some 400,000 renters have been served an eviction notice or told they could be, according to estimations from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF).

And an additional 450,000 households are behind on rent. Nearly a fifth of those have been in arrears for more than four months.

According to a poll of 10,000 households across Britain by JRF, black, Asian or minority ethnic renters were twice as likely to have concerns about evictions.

JRF estimated 1 million households are concerned about potential evictions in the next three months—half with children.

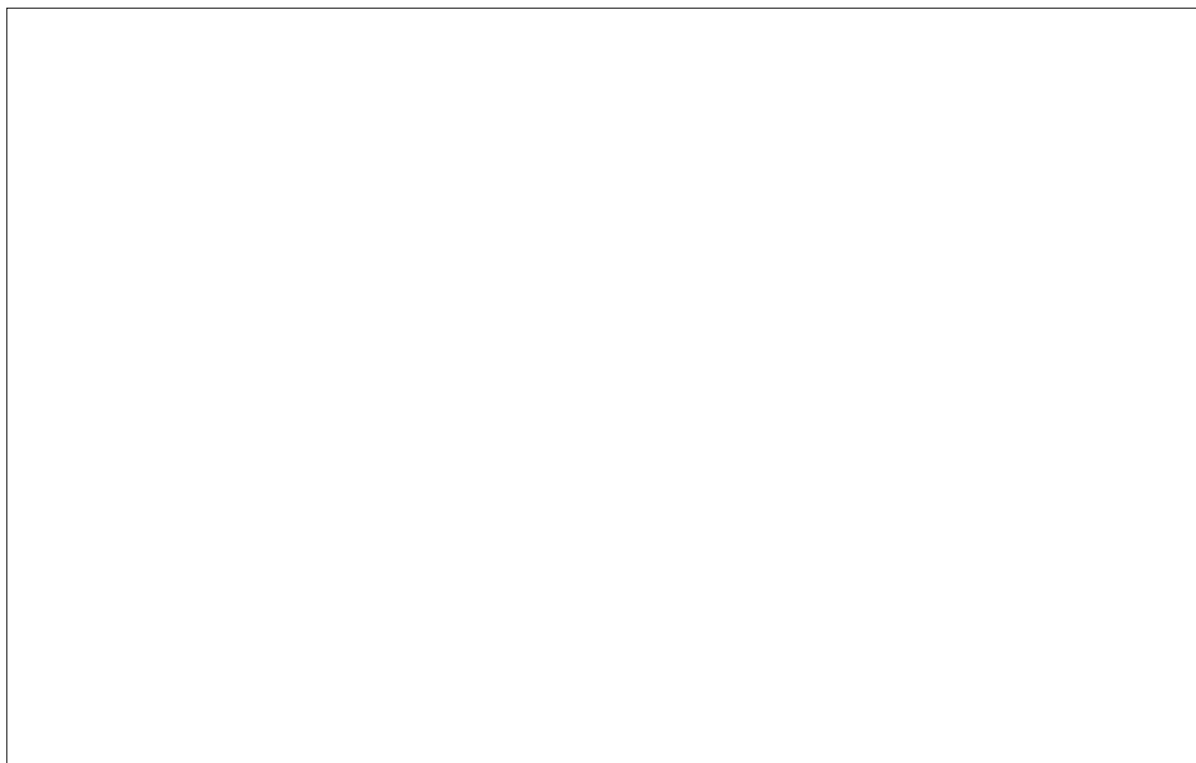
The evictions ban has been in place since March 2020 to protect tenants who were unable to pay rent and fell into arrears due to the pandemic.

But those who are already behind on four months' rent will only be given a one-month notice once the ban is lifted.

Lowered

Evictions have been proceeding through courts throughout the pandemic. For those who have already been served a notice, court bailiffs will be able to act within two weeks of when an eviction date is given.

According to housing charity Shelter, 72 percent of private renters are worried they will be unable to find a home after eviction. This



PROTESTING IN central London against the Tory housing bill in 2018



Evictions boom for letting agents

equates to 1.9 million adults.

Shelter also found that 47 percent of this group had made “unacceptable compromises” to pay rent.

This included living far away from family support or accepting poor conditions.

Of all private renters in England, 20 percent have had to cut back on food or heating.

And a third of those in arrears have borrowed during the pandemic in an attempt to cover rent.

Homelessness has also increased during the first two lockdowns, and the wave of evictions expected in the coming months will see numbers skyrocket again.

In Wales the ban will be lifted on 20 June, and in Scotland not until 30 September.

Dan Wilson Craw, deputy director of housing charity Generation Rent, said, “Lifting restrictions on evictions now, without dealing with all this debt, is a reckless move from a government who said people who lost income in the pandemic wouldn’t lose their home.”

Despite the pandemic hitting many working class people hard, the national restrictions are being lifted because it was “the right time”, according to the government.

It is prioritising landlords’ profits over people’s needs.

Renters need more help

THE JOSEPH Rowntree Foundation called on ministers to increase funding to those in arrears through the discretionary housing payment system (DHP).

The DHP allows councils to top up payments for tenants in need. It has been granted £180 million, which is “nowhere near enough” according to JRF.

Housing charity Generation Rent told the Tories to set aside £300 million to cover rent debts.

This is just over 5 percent of the £5 billion cost of the Stamp Duty

holiday—a tax break for buying a home that has pushed up house prices.

Meanwhile the poorest are suffering consequences of economic

crisis. JRF said this shows the government setting up a “two-tier recovery”.

The “unprecedented” support the Tories claim to have given has not been enough to keep many from falling into arrears.

And the Tories have only extended the Universal Credit £20 a week uplift until September.

Many are in housing need

School with Kingspan cladding

Deadly cladding still on school buildings

MORE THAN 70 schools have been built using combustible insulation, despite the material being banned on high-rise apartment blocks after the Grenfell Tower fire.

Plastic foam insulation was banned on residential buildings over 18 metres high in December 2018. But a further 25 hospitals, care homes and housing complexes are believed to have been built with flammable insulation.

Experts say this is almost definitely an underestimate.

The Department of Education revealed last week new fire safety proposals for schools that would allow deadly cladding to be used on buildings below 18 metres.

In the last five years 47 primary and secondary school buildings have been destroyed by a fire in England.

Inquiry

Kingspan, the company who made the flammable insulation for the Grenfell Tower refurbishment, told the government it opposed a ban of specific products.

The inquiry into the 2017 Grenfell fire has previously heard how Kingspan rigged tests to get its product on the market.

A council contractor was spotted using Kingspan insulation on a new special education needs school in North Kensington—where Grenfell Tower is.

“The fact that a construction company is using a known flammable product on a school, which is intended for 80 of the borough’s most vulnerable children, is beyond reprehensible,” local campaigner Leearna said.

“But the fact that RBKC (Kensington and Chelsea council) has yet again failed to oversee and scrutinise the works of their contractors on their builds, is ludicrous.”

The council had previously banned its contractors from using any products from companies involved in the fire that killed 72 people.

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Without a fightback, the Tories will survive Cummings

THE TORIES hope that Boris Johnson and Carrie Symonds' wedding will divert attention away from their catastrophic Covid-19 decisions

But testimony that Johnson's former chief adviser Dominic Cummings gave to MPs last week was devastating.

Cummings has exposed layers of Tory policies which led to mass Covid-19 deaths. Yet according to opinion polls, Boris Johnson seems to be getting away with it.

Hypocrite Cummings claimed that in the early days of the pandemic, "The prime minister described it as the new swine flu."

Johnson had even suggested he be injected with the virus on live TV in order to prove that it was relatively harmless.

Cummings added that Johnson is not a "fit and proper person" to lead during the pandemic. He confirmed that Johnson said he would rather "let the bodies pile high" rather than impose a new lockdown.

And he accused health secretary Matt Hancock not only of rank incompetence but of lying to ministers.

Cummings said Hancock had reassured him and others that the NHS had adequate supplies of personal protective medical equipment. This was just as stocks ran out and panic spread across hospitals.

Steel

Hancock had also lied about throwing a "protective ring" around care homes. He said this as thousands of infected hospital patients were being discharged into their care.

After Cummings' testimony, Hancock was asked repeatedly in the House of Commons whether he had told Downing Street that people being discharged had been tested. He refused to answer.

The cost of these, and dozens of other serious errors, could be measured in tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths, Cummings said.

He said Hancock should have been sacked, and that many key decision makers agreed.

But there's also a question for Cummings.

He says that in that autumn of 2020 he came to the conclusion that Boris Johnson was unfit for office. If this is true, surely he must explain why it is that he didn't come clean and tell everyone what was really going on.

Four opinion polls have been carried out since Cummings gave evidence. They all point to a significant Tory lead. The most recent YouGov poll predicted a huge 14 percent lead.

Fall

This shows that without opposition to the Tories, Cummings' attacks will fall flat. The strongest response Labour's leader Keir Starmer could manage was a column in the Guardian newspaper criticising Johnson's "mistakes."

He said these included imposing lockdowns too late. He also said Labour had called for lockdown restrictions earlier.

Yet Labour also added to pressure to lift lockdowns, at times demanding the government announce plans to ease restrictions.

And it refused to support teachers when they said it was too dangerous to reopen schools.

Trade union leaders sometimes criticised Starmer, but did too little themselves to stop their members being forced into unsafe workplaces.

Cummings' revelations should be enough to bring them down—but only if we use them to build a revolt against all those responsible for the tens of thousands of deaths.

DID JOHNSON get married last week to cover up his crisis?

End of lockdown restrictions will risk new devastating virus wave

BRITAIN MAY be in the early stages of a third wave of coronavirus, scientists are warning.

Professor Ravi Gupta from the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group said cases were "relatively low", but the Indian variant had caused "exponential growth".

"If things go as I think they are going to go, we will likely end up with a third wave.

"It will be a big wave of infections and there will be deaths and severe illness," he said on Monday.

Causing

The variant is causing almost three-quarters of new Covid-19 cases.

Last Sunday more than 3,000 new infections for Covid-19 were recorded for a fifth successive day. Cases have not surpassed this level since April.

Gupta has called on the government to postpone the

end of Covid-19 restrictions in England, currently set for 21 June.

"If you look at the costs and benefits of getting it wrong, I think it is heavily in favour of delay, so I think that's the key thing," he said.

The last stage of ending restrictions will remove all limits on how many people can meet outdoors or indoors.

The government is expected to make its final decision on when to do this by 14 June.

Gupta added that the number of people vaccinated means the wave would take longer to emerge than previous ones.

"There may be a false sense of security for some time, and that's our concern," he said.

The Indian variant B.1.617.2 is spreading faster than the Kent variant, which caused cases to surge over winter. It is not clear how resistant the Indian variant is to vaccines.

A rise in cases would put

the NHS under massive new pressure amid a backlog in non-coronavirus related cases and following two Covid-19 waves.

As the Tories encourage people to go out, scientists are calling for caution.

Susan Michie, a professor of health psychology at University College London and from the government's advisory Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours, said, "We're on a knife-edge.

"We could go either way with this new variant.

Run

"Either it could run away as it did before Christmas, which would be extremely serious and we'd have to have more restrictions, or potentially it could be contained."

But the Tories cannot be trusted to do anything except to continue to put profits before people's needs.

Isabel Ringrose

Claims that the virus began in a lab in Wuhan are gaining traction

Don't trust US or China to tell the truth on Covid-19

by YURI PRASAD

THE ORIGINS of the coronavirus that has so far killed an estimated 3.5 million people are again the subject of bitter rivalry between the US and China.

US President Joe Biden last week instructed intelligence agencies to further examine allegations that the virus “leaked” from a Chinese laboratory.

The claim has gained traction among some US scientists recently, and is backed by reports from US security services.

Their dossiers say a number of scientists from the Wuhan Institute of Virology were hospitalised shortly before the coronavirus outbreak was detected. They say that could be evidence of viral exposure.

Many people will be sceptical of such claims.

Racist

Former president Donald Trump used the allegations as part of his racist onslaught against China—and to distract from his terrible record on controlling the virus.

Biden also wants to be heard talking tough on China and defending US imperial interests, so his motives are deeply suspect.

But the possibility that a deadly form of the coronavirus did escape from a laboratory cannot yet be discounted.

It is widely acknowledged that scientific samples obtained from bats in remote parts of southern China were taken to Wuhan for analysis.

Virologists there wanted to assess whether any of the many kinds of coronaviruses carried by the bats could be transmitted to humans.

This was thought to have been the way the deadly Sars virus had emerged.

Experiments

Between 2015 and 2017 Wuhan scientists conducted experiments on several coronaviruses found in samples to see if they could be turned into human pathogens.

That in itself is not a sign of malicious intent.

People hoping to make vaccines might well require the information that such experiments provide.

But the process is extremely dangerous and has been banned in many countries, including the US in 2014.

It is at least theoretically possible that the virus began by infecting people

working in the Wuhan institute. Similar leaks have occurred at supposedly secure facilities across the world.

In order to help prevent future catastrophes, it is vitally important that the roots of the pandemic are explored. We already know that viruses that spread from animals to humans have been behind some of the world's biggest health emergencies in recent decades.

But no one should trust the administrations in the US or China to tell us the truth about what they know.

Biden sees the virus's origins story as a way of forcing China onto the defensive and limiting its growing global reach. His main interest is protecting the economic and military power of the US.

Worries

Meanwhile, the Chinese ruling class worries intensely that revelations about the virus laboratory in Wuhan may damage its reputation.

That's why the state threatened doctors that spoke out at the time of the initial outbreak in January last year.

Neither party has an interest in telling us the truth.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

RESISTANCE GIVES HOPE OF BREAK FROM TORY ‘NORMAL’

EVERYONE WANTS to get back to normal. But what does that mean? For most people it means being able to go about daily life without restrictions and without fear of picking up and passing on the virus.

For the Tories it means restoring the system of exploitation so bosses and landlords can keep grabbing money.

Back to normal means ending the eviction ban that helped to protect tenants who were unable to pay rent during the pandemic (see page three).

Back to normal means opening up jobcentres for face to face interviews so vulnerable benefits claimants can be sanctioned if they can't attend.

And back to normal also means pressing on with the decades-long assault on people's jobs, wages and living standards.

It feels like a very long time ago when, at the start of the pandemic, there was much talk of how things could never go back to normal.

Amid the dread and anxiety, there was also a sense that society would have to fundamentally

change in order to cope.

For a start, the state had to intervene in the economy in a way that ran against the very basic principles of what the Tories thought governments should do.

They shut down most businesses and subsidised wages, when for decades Tory and Labour governments wanted to interfere as little as possible with profits and pay.

Not only that, the pandemic raised even more fundamental questions about how society should run.

For instance, shortages in supermarkets meant it was possible to raise concrete arguments about how food is

produced and distributed. Trade union leaders also argued that things couldn't go back to normal.

They saw a future where union leaders had a seat at the table with bosses and governments.

Rather than lead a fight for a different kind of society, they held back and instead cooperated with bosses and the Tories to save jobs.

Meanwhile, those Tories and bosses got on with getting society back to how they ran it before.

Instead, the resistance came from outside the unions.

Three hugely significant movements have exploded onto the streets since the pandemic began—Black Lives Matter, Kill the Bill, and now solidarity with Palestine.

There have also been fightbacks led by students against unfair exam grades, and by NHS workers over pay.

Those movements want an end to the “normal” of racism, police violence, war and the inequalities of class society.

They have to be built on, and their spirit of revolt taken up in the trade unions.

We need that resistance so we don't go back to normal Tory rule.

“
The pandemic raised fundamental questions about how society's run

OPEN BORDERS FOR ALL

THE DEADLINE for European Union citizens to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) on 31 June is drawing steadily nearer.

Some 5.4 million applications have been made to the scheme, with 4.9 million granted.

EU citizens who have lived in Britain for five years can apply for settled status.

Those who have lived in Britain for less time can apply for pre-settled status.

Without either status, migrants living in Britain risk

living undocumented and hidden because they don't have the right paperwork or have missed the deadline.

And with home secretary Priti Patel's vicious attacks on refugees underway, Britain's hostile environment is set to become even more hostile.

“Taking back control of the borders” was the right's racist rallying cry to support a Tory version of Brexit.

The reality is around 1.3 million foreign born people have migrated from Britain over the past year

alone—exposing the lies about the influx of “migrant scroungers”.

Migrant workers leaving Britain does not improve wages and conditions for the workforce left behind. But the Tories push this myth to divide people.

For the workers who have left Britain and those that are yet to apply to the EUSS, Britain's racist policies will continue to discriminate either way and force many out.

The borders should be open to all those who want to come to Britain.

Breakfast in



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For updates and analysis on the stories that matter go to socialistworker.co.uk/breakfastinred



ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



What is behind the fears about inflation?

ONE ISSUE is dominating discussion of the major economies—inflation. This has to do with both reality and fear.

Reality—the rate at which prices increase is going up. Consumer price inflation in the United States in April rose to 4.2 percent.

In Britain, it more than doubled, to 1.5 percent, according to the Tories' favoured measure of the rate.

Fear—according to orthodox economic theory, inflation will accelerate. Why? Milton Friedman, an intellectual architect of neoliberalism, made his name during the great inflation of the 1960s and 70s.

He explained it by the quantity theory of money. According to Friedman, the rate of inflation depends on the amount of money in the economy. The more money, the more inflation will rise.

This provided Friedman with a tool for attacking the economic policies pursued by the leading capitalist states after 1945. Governments sought to achieve high growth and low unemployment by adjusting the levels of taxation and spending.

These policies were futile, Friedman argued. He said the level of employment depends on the wages workers are paid and the productivity they achieve.

Pouring more money into the economy will simply push up the rate of inflation. These arguments justified slashing public spending and attacking organised workers.

The resulting increase in the rate of exploitation in the North, and the inflow of goods made by low-paid workers in the new industrial economies brought inflation down.

But the fear of inflation's return continues to haunt the leading capitalist economies.

The leading central banks have kept the financial system afloat by creating money and pumping it into the banks in what's known as quantitative easing. Economists of the ultra-neoliberal Austrian school have been predicting a take-off of inflation, so far vainly. The reason is that the quantity theory of money is wrong. It focuses on the money supply, but, as both Karl Marx and Maynard Keynes argued, what matters is the demand for money.

Stimulus

You can put money into bank accounts—as the US government is doing with the stimulus cheques to citizens. But they may save it instead of spending it.

Thus quantitative easing has not led to a higher level of investment. The main reason is the comparatively low level of profitability. Corporate executives have preferred to buy back the shares of their companies, which boosts their own wealth.

The resulting stagnation has forced states to radicalise their policies, most recently we have seen the emergence of what is called “monetary finance”.

Governments have hugely increased their spending to keep firms and households going. They have covered this spending by borrowing, by issuing more government bonds. But these bonds have been bought mainly by the central banks, which are effectively creating the extra money governments are spending. The result is a huge increase in the money supply.

Commentators such as Martin Wolf of the Financial Times, who has long vacillated between Keynes and Friedman, are now ringing the alarm bells about inflation.

Are they right? The evidence is ambiguous. It's only some prices that have risen significantly, and this may just reflect short-term shortages caused by the lockdowns.

What mainstream economists are really scared off is what they call a “wage-price spiral”. In other words, workers react to higher prices by demanding and winning higher wages, and the bosses protect their profits by raising prices further.

This developed in the 1960s and 1970s. There's no sign of it yet, but there are quite a lot of reports of employers complaining of difficulty in recruiting workers, despite the millions laid off or furloughed.

Interestingly Joe Biden isn't worried. He said the other day, “Corporate profits are the highest they've been in decades, and workers' pay is the lowest it's been in 70 years.”

“We have more than ample room to raise workers' pay without raising customer prices.”

This reflects Biden's agenda of restoring US political stability by reducing inequality. But I don't think many bosses will agree.



STAND UP To Racism activists protested last week outside Downing Street against the antisemitic, Islamophobic and racist prime minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán after the Tories welcomed him to London

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

Protest on the anniversary of George Floyd's murder

by ISABEL RINGROSE

ANTI-RACISTS TOOK the knee across Britain on 25 May, the one-year anniversary of the police murder of George Floyd.

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and the TUC union federation called the day of action to fight back against institutional racism in Britain.

Around 70 anti-racists gathered in Windrush Square in Brixton, south London. Organiser Elizabeth told the protest, “We stand in a tradition of people coming together, old and young, black and white. Racism is not just a US problem—racism is part of the fabric of Britain.”

Elsewhere in south London, 60 gathered in Tooting and around 100 in Lewisham.

Gathered

In Glasgow over 50 gathered in the Southside and 70 in the West End.

Glasgow SUTR activist Ruby, told Socialist Worker, “BLM resonated around the world not just in sympathy with Minneapolis, but because so many relate on a day to day basis.”

In Brighton over 200 gathered. One speaker told the protest, “All lives can't matter until black lives matter.”

Meanwhile, over 150 assembled in Oxford. Activists marched to the statue of imperialist Cecil Rhodes that they are fighting to remove.

Over 35 people joined in Bournemouth and 70 in



Taking a knee in Brixton, south London

Derby. 50 joined in Lancaster, 40 in Southampton and 50 in Hackney, east London.

In Tower Hamlets, east London, over 35 trade unionists and health workers

took the knee. They pointed to the disproportionate number of black deaths during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At Bow and Langdon Park schools in the borough, school workers filled the playgrounds to take the knee.

Meanwhile, over 50 gathered in neighbouring Newham.

In Bristol activists gathered at the empty plinth of the statue of slave Edward Colston, which BLM activists dumped into the docks last summer.

Around 80 people came together to take the knee at an event organised by SUTR and Sheffield Take the Knee. There were union banners from the UCU, NEU and more.

Meanwhile, over 100 assembled in Manchester chanting, “Say his name.”

Many workers held actions in their workplaces. At City

and Islington Sixth Form College in north London, where union members are on strike, picketers took the knee.

And at Chesterfield College, students and staff also took part in the day of action.

And over 50 took the knee in the town centre later that day.

More than 40 workers at St Leonard's Hospital in Hackney, east London, took the knee.

Protests were also held in towns and cities, including Edinburgh, York, Leicester, Leeds, Portsmouth, Rochester, Darlington, Newcastle, Norwich, Liverpool, Birmingham and Nottingham.

Anti-racists and trade unionists must now build on the day of action to keep up the fight against institutional racism.

Join the SUTR conference on 16 October bit.ly/SUTR2021

Handcuffs role in Atkinson death

THE USE of handcuffs on Dalian Atkinson was “more likely than not” a factor in his death, a court has heard.

PC Benjamin Monk from West Mercia police is on trial for the murder of the former footballer, who died in Telford, Shropshire, in 2016.

He denies the charges. A forensic pathologist told the court that

“poor management” of Atkinson after he lost consciousness had probably contributed to his death.

This included poor posture and the “continued use” of handcuffs after Atkinson fell unconscious.

Atkinson was still handcuffed in the ambulance that took him to hospital, where

he later died from cardiac arrest at 2.45am on 15 August 2016.

Atkinson lost consciousness after he was tasered.

The court previously heard that he was allegedly tasered for six times longer than the standard length and kicked in the head multiple times by Monk. The trial continues.

Cab fight continues as union wins Uber deal

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

TAXI SERVICE Uber has struck a union recognition deal with the GMB union. It means that some 70,000 drivers can now choose to be represented by the union.

This comes after a Supreme Court ruling in February that Uber drivers should be classed as workers rather than self-employed.

National officer for GMB Mick Rix said, "This ground-breaking deal between GMB and Uber could be the first step to a fairer working life for millions of people. History has been made.

"This agreement shows gig economy companies don't have to be a wild west on the untamed frontier of employment rights."

GMB has said that Uber will now work with them on issues such as health and safety.

But the Financial Times newspaper said, "Uber will not engage in collective bargaining over earnings, including the implementation of the minimum wage. Uber will 'consult in some areas, collectively bargain in others' said Uber regional general manager Jamie Heywood."

A collective bargaining agreement with the GMB is a positive step for workers.

But bosses often concede deals with one union to avoid pressure from other unions they see as more threatening.

Rights

Some unions are pointing out that much more must be done to protect the rights of those who work for the company.

The App Drivers and Couriers Union (ADCU) has been organising Uber drivers since 2015. It said there would be obstacles for ADCU to come to an agreement similar to the one the GMB has.

James Farrar and Yaseen Aslam from the union said, "At this time ADCU is not prepared to enter into a recognition agreement with Uber.

"This is because Uber continues to violate basic employment law such as the right to the minimum wage for all working time and holiday pay despite the recent Supreme Court ruling in our favour."

ADCU also pointed out concerns

BACK STORY

In February Uber drivers won a battle to be classed as workers rather than contractors

- The Supreme Court ruled that workers could not be considered self-employed

- It meant they would be entitled to sick pay, minimum wage and other rights

- Uber has now struck a union recognition deal with GMB union

- But other unions are wary about the deal, and want more than just promises

about the motivations behind Uber's move to enter into a collective bargaining agreement.

It said, "We are disturbed by Uber's divisive and anti-union behaviour in the United States, most recently in California and New York State. Uber has used the appearance of blunt collective bargaining agreements to actually weaken the power of workers rather than the opposite."

Concern

And chair of United Private Hire Drivers (UPHD) Nader Awaad also voiced his concerns over the GMB deal. UPHD is a branch of the IWGB union.

"This recognition deal is a dud that signs away workers' right to negotiate over pay and is a PR exercise for Uber," Awaad explained.

These unions are right to be sceptical about the latest agreement between GMB and Uber.

There must be pressure from its newly unionised workers, and from other unions, to ensure the measures that Uber have promised are put in place.

And GMB must not be allowed to betray its members in upcoming battles with Uber bosses.

The fight for all those in Uber and similar jobs continues.

- ADCU London members have voted for a 24-hour boycott of the Taxi app service Bolt on 22 June. The group is protesting outside Bolt Office, 114 Power Road, Chiswick, London W4 5PY at 11am on the day.

UBER DRIVERS this year won a Supreme Court battle to be considered workers, rather than self-employed

Trade union membership on the rise, but much more resistance is needed

MORE WORKERS are getting organised against bosses' attacks. The number in trade unions in Britain rose by 118,000 last year to 6.56 million.

But there's absolutely no room for complacency in the figures. Based on them, it would take 60 years to return to the union numbers of the late 1970s.

The official trade union statistics issued by the Beis government department last week showed union membership has now risen for four consecutive years.

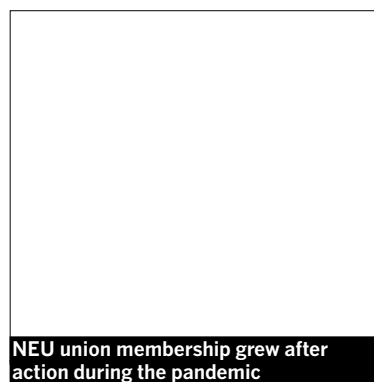
Overall 23.7 percent of workers were in a union, slightly up from the year before.

A year of a pandemic and reckless treatment from callous bosses will have encouraged more workers to look for a collective response.

Public sector union members were up 228,000 on the year before to four million in 2020.

Education at 51 percent union membership and "public administration" at 42 percent were the two sectors with the highest proportions of workers in unions.

The proportion of employees who were trade union members was highest in the black or black British ethnic group. It



stood at 27 percent compared to 24 percent for white workers.

Disabled workers are also more likely to join a union.

It's good to see a rise in union numbers, but significant problems remain.

There was a fall of 110,000 in trade union membership among private sector workers to 2.56 million in 2020.

This is one of the lowest levels of private sector trade union membership ever.

And just 4 percent of trade unionists are aged between 16 and 24, while 39 percent are aged 50 or older.

Union membership is also weak among the lowest paid workers. Trade unionists make

up just 13 percent of those earning less than £250 a week and 24 percent of those earning between £250 and £499 a week.

That's compared to 31 percent for those earning between £500 and £999 a week and 18 percent among those earning over £1,000 a week.

A basic task of unions is to win better wages, and historically there is a "trade union wage gap" where members are paid more.

That's still true in the public sector where trade union members were paid 9 percent more than non-members.

But in the private sector the trade union wage gap went from 3.6 percent in 2019 to minus 3.6 percent in 2020.

As the report says, "This is the first time that non-union members in the private sector had higher average gross hourly earnings than union-members."

This points to the central truth.

Unions recruit best when there is a sense of struggle.

There will only be a real shift in union membership if there is more confrontation with the bosses. We need far, far more of the spirit of resistance.

Charlie Kimber



Brazilian protesters demand the fall of Bolsonaro

Following the chaos caused by the mishandling of the pandemic in Brazil, **Sophie Squire** reports on the mass protests calling for change

TENS OF thousands of people took to the streets in Brazil last Saturday to protest against the lethal pandemic policies of far right president Jair Bolsonaro.

There were protests in over 200 towns and cities, including the capital Brasilia where protesters marched to Brazil's congress.

Bolsonaro has denied the severity of the virus over the past year, despite Brazil having the second highest Covid-19 infection rate in the world after the US.

More than 462,000 people have died due to the virus and only 10 percent of the population is fully vaccinated.

In Rio de Janeiro crowds chanted "Bolsonaro genocide" and "Go away Bolsovirus". Protesters carried signs that read, "Out with Bolsonaro" and "Impeachment now."

And they broadened their demands to include more protection for indigenous people.

Protester Omar Silveira said, "We must stop this government. We must say enough is enough."

"Bolsonaro is a murderer. He has no feelings. He does not feel, as we do. He cannot perceive the disaster that he is causing."

Polls suggest 57 percent of the population backs his impeachment.

Bullets

In Pernambuco in the north east of the country, the police used pepper spray, gas bombs and rubber bullets to try and disperse crowds.

And at a protest in Sao Paulo nurse Patricia Ferreira said Bolsonaro was "worse than the virus".

"We are exhausted, with our healthcare system on the verge of collapse. There is no solution to the pandemic with him in power," she added.

Student Beatriz Fernanda Silva said she was at the protests to honour

FIGURE IT OUT

10.4%

of Brazilians are fully vaccinated

462,092

people have died from the virus

16,515,120

recorded cases

the memory of her uncle who died as a result of Bolsonaro's handling of the virus. Beatriz said, "I came here to fight for the vaccine that he was unable to get and could have saved him."

Anger at Bolsonaro follows major setbacks. The Brazilian senate has mounted an investigation into the government's handling of the virus.

The senator leading the inquiry has alleged that Bolsonaro did not want to provide vaccines, but instead believed herd immunity would lead to cases falling.

A representative from pharmaceutical company Pfizer also spoke out and said Bolsonaro refused offers for months of vaccines by the company.

Bolsonaro was also recently fined for breaking health and safety restrictions at a public event.

The huge movement against the president came a week after Bolsonaro and his far right followers took part in a motorcade rally through the streets of Rio de Janeiro.

At the rally Bolsonaro advocated against further lockdowns. His supporters made calls for the Brazilian senate to be dismantled to limit political opposition.

More protests against the far right leader and his murderous policies have the power to break him.

PROTESTERS ACROSS Brazil demanded the president be punished for his murderous Covid-19 policies

Violence against protests increases in Colombia while talks collapse

PROTESTS ARE continuing to rage in Colombia despite escalating state violence.

It has been reported that 13 people were killed at a protest in the south-western city Cali, on Friday of last week.

Humans Rights Watch now believes the total number of deaths since the start of the protests totals almost 70.

There are also reports that the Mobile Anti-Riot Squadron, which is known to use extreme violence, has been torturing and detaining protesters.

Some humanitarian organisations have also reported the existence of mass graves.

Strikes and protests began on 28 April after right wing President Ivan Duque announced plans to raise taxes on essential items.

Duque was forced to quickly announce there would no longer be increases on items such as food and gas four days later, but protests continued.

Protests have already forced concessions from the government.

These includes the voting down of the health reform bill that would give more power to private healthcare providers.

The government was also made to examine its own violent treatment of protesters, issuing

a decree that security forces must use the appropriate levels of force.

But since then, the brutal repression by the police and military against protesters has only worsened.

In a statement from the National Strike Committee, which has entered talks with the government, a draft of an agreement to end the violence was rejected by those in power. Its demands include an end to police brutality and the resignation of defence minister Diego Molano.

The talks then collapsed on Sunday. But talks have already faced a number of dead ends.

One of the first was that the government said it wanted the National Strike Committee to lift roadblocks across the country.

These roadblocks of people have caused shortages of food as well as costing the state millions.

Reactionary forces have tried to organise against the roadblocks. Thousands joined a demonstration in the capital Bogota on Sunday to call for an end to protests and in support of security forces.

But the roadblocks have mostly been organised by ordinary people—out of the control of the National Strike Committee.

The Committee last week pushed for more protests.

It says this is to pressure the government into more negotiations.

But it also made it clear that negotiations with the government are designed to do a deal with, not remove, Duque.

And despite talks collapsing, the trade unions and social movements involved in the National Strike Committee say they will continue to look to negotiate with the government.

Calling for the protests to end would be a mistake.

The government has already been pushed to make concessions to the protesters.

Only more action—not negotiations—will force real change.

Cummings should be goings

THE EFFORT of Dominic Cummings, the former chief adviser to prime minister Boris Johnson, to wreak revenge on his former employer is a classic Westminster farce.

Whatever the truth of the allegations he made in parliament, nobody should entertain for a moment Cummings' ludicrous attempts to portray himself as the good guy of the coronavirus crisis.

Cummings expects us to believe that he was secretly, behind the scenes, trying to save us all from the Johnson government's disastrous response to the pandemic.

This from a man who cared so little about the general public that he drove 264 miles from his London home to his parents' estate in County Durham while infected with Covid-19.

If Cummings genuinely cared about the tens of thousands of lives lost to the government's murderous Covid policies, he would have resigned.

In reality, he was happy to stay at the heart of this vile Tory government until he was forced out over a spat with Johnson's fiancée Carrie Symonds.

Cummings is the father of Johnson's right-wing, xenophobic version of Brexit.

Far from being a principled opponent of Johnson, he is a vicious ideologue of the hard right and an enemy of working class people.

Mark Brown
Glasgow



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Spirit of anti-racism grows—and my hospital is proof

SOMETIMES YEARS of patient work as anti-racists and trade unionists pays off.

That's certainly how many of us activists at the Homerton and St Leonard's hospitals in east London feel after our protests to mark a year since the murder of George Floyd.

We organised take the knee events at our two key sites last week and were taken aback when well over 100 staff joined them.

A Union union steward at St Leonard's described to me walking down the hospital's main corridor to go to the protest and being joined by dozens of colleagues from different offices.

Together they all knelt to remember the victims of racist policing. It was a tremendous

sight. The spirit of anti-racism has grown strongly during the year of the pandemic.

Of course health workers are exhausted, and many are traumatised by what we've been through.

But many are also enraged by what the pandemic has revealed about the state of the world.

I've had lots of new members of staff, black and white, coming up to me to say that they are really passionate about anti-racism. And often they know about protests and events even before I do.

So we've had an influx of energy.

Perhaps most importantly, many black workers that were previously reluctant to engage are doing so now. We've had people speaking

out in a way that didn't happen before.

I think that is in part because the union branch has made anti-racism so much part of what we are. That's created trust, and a space where people feel comfortable to say what's on their mind.

That feeling has spread to many white workers too, and some have described how their attitude to racism has been changed by what they've seen in the Black Lives Matter movement.

As activists, sometimes we underestimate the effect we are having.

This week has been a brilliant reminder of just how important that work is.

Jordan Rivera
East London

We need mass direct action to free Palestine

I'M SURE those of us who have marched in solidarity with Palestine this past fortnight will cheer the action taken by activists from Palestine Action in Leicester.

They shut down the killer drone factory owned by Elbit Systems, an Israeli arms manufacturer.

Arms made in Britain are used to kill Palestinians. Such action highlights the complicity of the British government in the deaths of Palestinians.

Direct action plays a

role in building mass movements, but I think the activists could take a lesson or two from Extinction Rebellion (XR).

If we are to be successful in isolating Israel over its crimes against the Palestinians we need to build a mass movement.

XR has been successful in building a mass movement by using direct action as a tactic.

Mass involvement is the key to any successful movement.

John Sinha
North London

Pupils at my old school not 'antisemitic'

AFTER A recent pro-Palestine demo by school pupils, the headteacher of Allerton Grange high school in Leeds said that some people saw the Palestinian flag as a "symbol of antisemitism".

Roper has been forced to apologise after an outcry over his comments, and rightly so. Allerton Grange was and is a diverse school.

When I was a student there in 2014, Israel launched deadly attacks on Gaza.

Me and other Jewish students were proud to stand with students of all religions and backgrounds



to walk out in support of Palestine.

It is a credit to the students, parents and

teachers of Allerton Grange that the tradition of walkouts still continues.

My experiences of protests at the school shaped my politics and involved me in wider movements.

I'm sure the same will be true for those that attend Allerton Grange today.

The mass movement in solidarity with Palestine has always included schools—and they have an absolute right to be included.

Solidarity with the students, parents and staff at Allerton Grange. Free Palestine.

Alex Claxton-Mayer
Newcastle

Just a thought...

Betrayed by the Greens

JANE BOLAM argued last week that we should embrace the Green Party as fellow radicals (Letters, 26 May).

I wonder how she feels after watching the Irish Greens this week voting against the parliamentary motion to expel the Israeli ambassador to Ireland.

Their votes could have seen history made but instead the Greens choose respectability.

Paul Smyth
West London

●RADICAL Greens? Here in Durham they've just united with the LibDems and the Tories to oust Labour and form a new administration.

Just another reason why a "progressive alliance" is a non-starter.

Dave Porter
Bishop Auckland

Cities where power lies

SANTOSHI Lahiri argues that a turn to armed struggle in rural areas is the best way to ensure victory for democratic forces in Myanmar (Letters, 19 May).

It is certainly true that the military are taking some hits in the battle in the countryside.

But the revolt in the towns is hitting the profits vital to the regime's survival. That is where people have power.

James
by e-mail

Is Israel really a US proxy?

I AGREE with the central thrust of your argument on Israel (Socialist Worker, 19 May). A two-state solution for Palestine has been killed off by Israeli governments since the Oslo accords.

But this idea of Israel as the US proxy in the Middle East just doesn't stack up in the post-Cold War era.

America has been happy to intervene directly itself and fight wars in the region.

Andy
On Facebook

Oh, Starmer!

LABOUR'S KEIR Starmer pledged to oppose any motion of no confidence in Matt Hancock. Tells you everything.

Pete
By Email

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE NON-BINARY?

The Tories' determination not to recognise people who are non-binary helps spread fear and prejudice. **Isabel Ringrose** spoke to people at the sharp end of this pernicious form of discrimination

WHILE transgender and non-binary people are more visible today than before, they are also facing more attacks.

Worldwide the numbers of murders and assaults of trans and non-binary people are rising annually, as are restrictions on access to services such as medical treatment.

Some people don't neatly fit into the categories of "man" or "woman." For example, some people have a gender that blends elements of being a man or a woman, or a gender that is different than either male or female. Some people don't identify with any gender. Some people's gender changes over time.

Non-binary is a way such people commonly describe themselves.

But the Tories reaffirmed last week that non-binary will not be allowed as a legally recognised gender identity.

A consultation in 2018 looked into proposed reforms for the Gender



I have to figure out how someone feels about gender before coming out, says Lake

Recognition Act (GRA). It found that 65 percent of respondents thought changes needed to be made to allow non-binary identification.

Yet in their analysis, the Tories said the consultation "did not bring forward any proposals to extend the GRA to provide legal recognition to a third, or non-binary, gender". The Tories scrapped plans to reform the GRA last year.

A new petition to the government has called for non-binary legal recognition. The Cabinet Office recently responded that there are "complex practical consequences" if non-binary was recognised.

Non-binary people at the receiving end of the Tories' hostility spoke to Socialist Worker about how the lack of recognition affects their lives.

Bee identifies as trans non-binary and gender fluid. "There is a misconception that non-binary means not having a gender or being genderless. It's not feeling you fit into the existing binary

Trans and non-binary people have become more visible in society

gender categories of man or woman," Bee explained.

The biggest problems they face because of their gender are "constantly being misgendered, and a lack of any recognition that gender could be anything other than man or woman".

They say these difficulties "stem from a lack of understanding and general recognition of non-binary as a concept and gender."

Moss is non-binary. "This means I don't fit into the pre-set genders," they said. They said the Tories' decision "means you aren't covered legally for discrimination laws". Moss added, "It's a lot easier for people to say non-binary doesn't exist."

Connection

Lake is also non-binary and explained the effects of limited recognition and education. "I have to figure out how someone feels about gender before coming out," they said.

"If someone doesn't know, I have to make a connection—for example if they've talked about having trans friends," Lake said. "Outing yourself is a big thing and it's always on your mind."

Moss added, "It's exhausting—it feels really demoralising not really being seen or understood by society."

"Trans people and gender non-conforming people are still the butt of jokes. How we're represented in the media is then how people view things."

Different non-binary people may use different pronouns. Many non-binary people use "they" while others use "he" or "she", and others use other pronouns. These should be respected.

Bee explained, "If people use the wrong pronoun, then I'm locked into the 'woman' I'm perceived as. I have to make a split decision to let it go and feel crass about myself, or name the problem and risk becoming the problem," they said.

"It would be really helpful if people could not feel excluded from discussions and spaces. But any system I have to engage in I get put into a box. I can't have my gender recognised and be seen as who I am to access medical care."

Lake added that "there needs to be less stigma" for trans and non-binary people.

"People who say we don't need to worry about pronouns are the ones who get concerned when pronouns are used in a way they don't like," they said.

Bee also thinks that misgendering matters. "It's about having basic respect for people," they said. They explained that there's also a perception of non-binary as a "new thing, and a fad".

"That misconception comes from people not being able to exist outside the binary way of thinking about gender," they said.

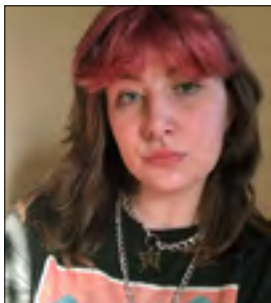
"We need to start from much further back and explore how gender was constructed."

Lake said, "We live in a society that doesn't put people's needs first—there's boxes you have to fit into and if you don't, you're demonised."

Moss said that narrow ideas of gender don't benefit anyone.

"Think about attitudes towards mental health," they said. "The idea that men shouldn't talk about feelings, to man up and be a manly man is damaging."

Why does capitalism rely on gender stereotypes?



Con (top) identifies as bi-gender, rather than being outside binary genders. 'Outing yourself is a big thing and it's always on your mind,' says Lake (middle) the non-binary flag (above)

THE RULING class dismiss gender identity because it poses an alternative to some of the oppressive ideals their system relies on.

Transphobia isn't random prejudices. Oppression is used by the ruling class under capitalism to keep the working class divided—and gender roles are vital to capitalism.

The right uses gender identity to ramp up "culture wars".

They look to cut across class by demonising trans people as a risk to family life that is intertwined with class society.

Women lost out thousands of years ago with the emergence of classes. Society had progressed to the point where there was a surplus beyond the necessities to survive.

Those who controlled it became a ruling class, and created state structures to protect it.

There was simultaneously a shift in women's status, described by socialist Frederick Engels in the 19th century as "the world historic defeat of the female sex".

From being co-decision-makers with men, they were thrust into a position of dependence and subordination.

The new intensive production techniques tended to prioritise men's labour over women's for the first time.

A woman became a "wife", part of a tightly organised family. For the ruling class that family was to produce heirs and pass on property.

And the working class family played a key role in reproducing the next generation of labour, based on the unpaid labour of women.

The freedom to express gender or sexuality was lost.

Panicked

The rise of capitalism pushed people into big cities and factories with appalling conditions. This threatened the family set-up, and bosses panicked as they needed new generations of healthy workers to profit off.

The creation of the ideology of the nuclear family was pushed so that children were raised at no cost to the state or the bosses.

Anything that threatened this, such as alternatives to gender norms, was denounced and sometimes criminalised.

To uphold this, further fusing of gender and biological sex



Differences between men and women have been used to justify women's oppression

Capitalism needs the nuclear family

determined what women and men were "naturally" expected to do.

Myths are pushed that women are naturally emotional, caring and nurturing, so take on the care-giving role based on the fact they have certain physical characteristics.

Worldwide this saves the ruling classes trillions annually in unpaid labour.

Nuclear

Meanwhile men are tough, competitive, made to earn a living and prefer the colour blue.

But these gender roles are a product of the material basis of class society.

They are created by the structure of the nuclear family to shape the social relations between the exploited and exploiters.

So-called differences between men and women have been used to justify women's oppression ever since.

Biological sex isn't as binary as capitalist ideology would have us believe. And that goes further than the existence of intersex people who don't fit into XX or XY chromosomes.

Women and LGBT+ people have won gains through struggle.

But ruling classes can roll back such achievements in order to deepen divides and step up oppression.

The presidency of Donald Trump saw assaults on LGBT+ rights as well as attacks on the rights of women, migrants, Muslims and black people.

The gay liberation movements of the 1960s won rights for sexuality—but gender rights were only given limited recognition decades later.

As a result, same sex couples can legally marry and adopt children to serve the nuclear family and gender roles the system is dependent on. Transgender and gender non-conforming people are still seen as a threat

By fighting against oppression as a class and removing the economic base to it—capitalism—the foundation for women's oppression is removed. As are the gender roles and nuclear family that flow from it.

Only in a socialist society can people win real liberation.

Challenging gender means moving beyond the binary

CON IDENTIFIES as bi-gender. Rather than being outside the binary genders, they "flick between genders". Con says they would prefer to not have to pick between man or woman when formally identifying.

This isn't because they care what the Tories think, but because they "should be referred to correctly on paperwork."

"It's also about validation," Con said.

Lake agreed. "Non-binary people aren't confused—and being non-binary can look different on everyone. There's not one way to live."

Experience

And Bee thinks, "The only way people reject the boxes we're put in is to erode the boundaries.

"The more genders we have then everybody can describe their own experience in a way that suits them."

Con added that in a liberated world, "We're going to have people expressing how they want in lots of different genders, or no gender whatsoever."



We need a society without stereotyping

"But we won't have the association with gender stereotypes.

"A society without gender stereotypes also won't be based on physical characteristics.

"We live with specific gender stereotypes invented by class society and capitalism. The key is what we do now—and that is to build struggle and solidarity."

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings

Booklaunch

MARCHERS DEMAND Scottish independence

Breaking up the British state Scotland, Independence and Socialism

BIRMINGHAM
Wed 9 June, 7pm
281-634-5938

COVENTRY
Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
823-945-1917

BLACK COUNTRY, SHROPSHIRE AND STAFFORDSHIRE
Will technology solve the climate crisis?

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
914-9548-1031

BOURNEMOUTH
Where do sexism and women's oppression come from?

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
8682-810-8409

BRADFORD
A rebel's guide to Trotsky

Thu 10 June, 7pm
885-9187-7552

BRIGHTON & HOVE
Greed and the Super League—how capitalism is destroying sport

Thu 10 June, 6.30pm
841-2142-3683

BRISTOL
Colonialism, imperialism and the Middle East

Thu 10 June, 7.30pm
688-397-3148

BURNLEY & PENDLE
Pamphlet launch: Capitalism and the politics of food

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
446-409-5118

CAMBRIDGE
How can Palestine be free?

Thu 10 June, 7.30pm

681-800-4408

CARDIFF
Where do sexism and women's oppression come from?

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
630-181-4857

CHESTERFIELD
Can Biden put the US back together again?

Thu 10 June, 7pm
828-532-8731

DEVON & CORNWALL
Can capitalism ever be sustainable?

Thu 10 June, 7.30pm
865-2972-2883

DORSET
Pamphlet launch: Capitalism and the Politics of Food

Thu 10 June, 7.30pm
706-382-3359

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH
The environment and the myths of overpopulation

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
894-2628-7708

EAST MIDLANDS
Let's talk about sex—Marxism and sexual liberation

Wed 9 June, 7pm
354-874-4790

EDINBURGH
How can Palestine be free?

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm

431-459-112

HASTINGS
British imperialism, Palestine and the Middle East

Wed 9 June, 7pm
871-7107-4592

HOME COUNTIES
Colonialism, imperialism and the Middle East

Thu 10 June, 6.30pm
872-4922-1957

HUDDERSFIELD
Booklaunch: Rebellious Daughters of History

Wed 9 June, 6.30pm
290-168-1804

KENT
Climate change and the myth of overpopulation

Thu 10 June, 8.15pm
434-623-8064

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE
Free speech, the Tories and defending our rights

Thu 10 June, 7pm
992-204-9372

LEEDS
After the Sewell report—how do we beat institutional racism?

Thu 10 June, 7pm
881-4770-0676

LIVERPOOL
The history of LGBT+ oppression

Wed 9 June, 7pm

493-925-5919

LONDON: HACKNEY
What are the prospects for change in South America?

Thu 10 June, 7.30pm
854-8245-8715

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Can Biden put the US back together again?

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
459-388-1576

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Why the Cop process has failed to tackle climate change

Thu 10 June, 7pm
874-012-7970

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Why the Cop process failed to tackle climate change

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LONDON: SOUTH EAST
Will Biden increase imperialist tensions?

Thu 10 June, 7pm
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What would socialism look like?

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
818-391-0420

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST
Why do we live in a sexist society?

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
543-023-057

LONDON: WEST AND NORTHWEST
100 years since Partition—can there be a united Ireland?

Thu 10 June, 7.30pm
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MANCHESTER
A rebel's guide to George Orwell

Wed 9 June, 7.15pm
323-178-7151

NORWICH
The US and China—imperialism and the shifting balance of power

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
906-652-5299

OXFORD & THAMES VALLEY
Why all the statues must fall—confronting the legacy of empire

Wed 9 June, 7pm
861-2001-6477

PORTSMOUTH
Where do sexism and women's oppression come from?

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
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SHEFFIELD & SOUTH YORKSHIRE
The Paris Commune of 1871, when workers "stormed heaven"

Thu 10 June, 7pm
528-174-9278

SOUTHAMPTON
Why Israel is a racist state

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
381-513-5080

SWANSEA & WEST WALES
What is Zionism?

Thu 10 June, 7pm
902-964-963

WIGAN
The Egyptian Revolution—why it matters ten years on

Thu 10 June, 7pm
872-5136-9540

YORK & SCARBOROUGH
Marxism and disability

Wed 9 June, 7.30pm
827-489-7492



The Socialist Workers Party is holding online meetings during the coronavirus crisis. This is to ensure that there can still be collective local discussion, organising and actions.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty for news of national online meetings and other updates.

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A disturbing yet beautiful film about grief and identity

In *After Love*, recently bereaved Mary Hussein discovers her husband's secret life—and what she has in common with his other family, writes **Sophie Squire**

AFTER LOVE is a film about identity, culture and grief written and directed by Aleem Khan in his debut feature film.

After the death of her husband, Muslim convert Mary Hussain, played by Joanna Scanlan, uncovers a secret from his past. He has a partner across the Channel in France.

Wanting to discover more, Mary travels to Calais and becomes the cleaner for her husband's partner Genevieve, played by Nathalie Richard.

Mary soon discovers they have a son named Solomon (Talid Ariss) together.

Tension builds as Mary continues to visit Genevieve and Solomon's house to clean. She uncovers old photos of her husband and tapes that are entirely alien to her.

The audience is left willing Mary to tell Solomon and Genevieve what has happened to their partner and father as they simply believe he's away working.

Mary starts to develop relationships with Genevieve and Solomon. In some ways this is disturbing considering she has lied to enter their home.

At one stage she even sends messages to Solomon pretending to be his father.

But during her visits she is able to start to find things in common with two people her husband loved.

One of the most poignant scenes is when Mary cooks dinner for Solomon and speaks to him in Urdu.

Understand

She mentioned that she learnt it so she could understand what her husband's family says about her.

The film only touches on why Mary converted to Islam. But Mary's religious choices aren't really what this film is about.

And the film makes no moral judgement against Ahmed, or Genevieve who knew he had a wife when they were together.

Instead this film focuses on people left behind after the death of a loved one, and the things they have in common despite their different backgrounds.

Scanlan shines as Mary despite speaking very little for a large part of the film.

She expertly plays a character that is cowed by grief, but also determined to discover the truth.

And Ariss is brilliant as a young man discovering different facets of his identity.

This is a beautiful and sad film.

After Love is in cinemas from Friday 4 June



ARTEFACTS FROM Iran's rich past

Epic exhibition spanning Iranian history

EXHIBITION

EPIC IRAN

At the V&A, central London, until 12 Sept. Book online at vam.ac.uk

EPIC IRAN explores 5,000 years of Iranian art, design and culture, bringing together over 300 objects from ancient, Islamic and contemporary Iran.

Iran was home to one of

the great historic civilisations, yet its monumental artistic achievements remain unknown to many.

Epic Iran explores this civilisation and the country's history right up to the 21st century.

It begins with the earliest known writing—signalling the beginning of history in Iran—and runs through to the

1979 Revolution and beyond. There are ten sections to this exhibition.

The first looks at striking imagery of the country's dramatic and varied landscapes which have shaped the country's social, economic and political history.

The last covers the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and the establishment of the Islamic Republic.

Fighting racism decades after the Civil Rights Act

DOCUMENTARY

THE BLACK AMERICAN FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

Available now on BBC iPlayer

IN THE US, if you're black, you're five times more likely to go to prison than if you're white. And the typical white family has eight times the wealth of the typical black family.

More than fifty years on from the Civil Rights Act, this documentary asks why the US is still such an unequal society.

It features compelling

interviews with those who were at the forefront of the struggle for a fair system in education, housing and criminal justice.

Through them, the film reveals the key court cases, Supreme Court rulings and laws that failed to bridge the gap.

And it gives the context to the anger of the millions of people who took to the streets during the Black Lives Matter protests.

The movement was not just calling for an end to police brutality but also for something that had been pledged decades ago—racial equality.



Activist Helen Moore is interviewed

TELEVISION

TIME

Starts Sunday 6 June, 9pm, BBC1

THE BBC is making a big deal of this new three-part prison drama—and not just because of its big name actors.

Sean Bean is Mark Cobden, a teacher who finds himself in prison, consumed by guilt and out of his depth.

His story intertwines with prison guard Eric McNally, played by Stephen Graham, who is forced into a dangerous situation after a threat from a prisoner.

Bean and Graham contribute a lot to the series' strength. Bean is more Roy Cropper than Ned Stark here—but is utterly convincing as a quiet man who just wants to keep his



Bean and Graham in *Time*

head down. Graham's role is more familiar for him, but he does look and speak like a prison guard.

More than that, the claustrophobic, noisy, stressful atmosphere of prison is pervasive. Close camera angles, constant background noise, but quiet, understated yet shocking violence in the foreground.

If there's a message—delivered in some at times blunt exposition—it's that crowding vulnerable and troubled people into prison is a dangerous idea.

Often this still seems to rest on the idea that the prisoners are the real danger.

But it is an absorbing and troubling drama.

Nick Clark

What's on at Bookmarks

The socialist bookshop

Breaking up the British State

Scotland, independence and socialism

Online booklaunch

6:30pm, Friday 4 June
Watch at bit.ly/BreakBritishState



IN THE wake of Israel's horrifying assault on Palestinians last month, the US now claims to want to fund the "reconstruction" of the Gaza Strip.

First, president Joe Biden backed Israel's airstrikes on Gaza. Then he intervened to rein Israel in. Now he claims to want to send aid to Palestinians. What's going on?

The relationship between the US and Israel has not always been straightforward. Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu made no secret that he preferred Donald Trump as US president over Barack Obama.

But support for Israel has been a precondition for every US president for the last five decades at least. The relationship between Israel and the US is about much more than which personalities and parties are in charge of their respective governments.

It's about the much more fundamental question of the US's aim to keep its grip on the Middle East, and Israel's role in supporting that.

From the very beginning, Israel has relied on the support of bigger imperial powers. It wouldn't exist without this.

Its founders—the leaders of the Zionist movement that aimed to establish a Jewish state in Palestine—explicitly sought this out.

They appealed to the British Empire by offering to help police the Arab population in Palestine, which it seized for itself after the First World War.

British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour responded with a promise of a "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

It was only after the decline of the British Empire—and its exit from Palestine in 1948—that the US began to play a more fundamental role in supporting Israel.

Expelled

The US was the first country to recognise Israel as a state in 1948.

This came after Israel expelled some 850,000 Palestinians in a campaign of ethnic cleansing designed to ensure they would be a minority in the new state of Israel.

But it was still another two decades before the US began to treat Israel as its most important ally in the Middle East.

While the US did offer some financial aid to Israel through the 1940s and 50s it was mostly in the form of loans. At the time the US even opposed some arms sales to Israel.

The US ruling class wanted to build links with several states in the Middle East against Russia, and Israel was just one among many. And most ordinary people in Arab countries supported the Palestinians.

The US worried that appearing too friendly to Israel

would scupper its deals with Arab leaders. Israel had to prove to the US that its support was indispensable.

In 1951, after the Iranian government nationalised its oil industry, Israeli newspaper Haaretz explained the role Israel's leaders hoped they could play.

"Strengthening Israel helps Western powers maintain stability in the Middle East. Israel is to become the watchdog," it wrote. "If the Western powers



Israel could be relied on to punish several neighbouring states

should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several neighbouring states whose discourtesy to the West went beyond the bounds of the permissible."

As anti-colonial struggles of the 1950s and 60s weakened Britain's and then the US's hold on the Middle East, Israel saw its opportunity.

In 1967 Israel provoked a war with Jordan, Egypt and Syria—whose Arab nationalist

governments threatened the US's interests and were allied to Russia.

It defeated them all. This not only began Israel's occupation of the West Bank, east Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights. It also proved that Israel could use its military strength in the Middle East on the US's behalf.

In return the US poured funding into Israel so it could build up its military.

US FUNDING for Israel skyrocketed after this. During the 1960s, US military loans to Israel averaged £17 million a year. Between 1970 and 1974, that rose to £345 million.

In return, Israel has continued to serve the US in this way ever since. The US itself is explicit about this.

In 2008 its congress passed a law to ensure that Israel keeps a "qualitative military edge" over all other states in the Middle East. To make sure Israel's military is the most powerful in other words.

That's because Israel is, in the words of US congress briefing, "a vital partner in the region."

It adds, "US aid packages for Israel have reflected this calculation."

In fact, the US has given at least £95 billion worth of aid to Israel—and this is increasingly in the form of military aid.

Israel's economy is entirely dependent on this. Its own arms and tech industries, central to its economy, developed out of this.

Its protection of the US's "strategic interests" has meant the US has had an important part in crushing Palestinian revolts.

Uprising

The Palestinian uprising that began in December of 1987, the First Intifada, posed a threat to the Israeli state. It also threatened to inspire revolts across the Middle East.

The US knew something had to be done and so organised the Oslo Accords between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership in 1993 to try and crush resistance.

This helped the US to contain the Palestinian resistance by co-opting the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The PLO abandoned its calls for a single state where Jews and Palestinians could live alongside each other—essentially giving up Palestinians' claim to all of their land.

Ever since then, the Palestinian Authority (PA) cooperated alongside Israel in "security coordination" in the occupied West Bank. But it has never been allowed the state it was promised.

The two-state promise was a fiction designed to contain Palestinian resistance and keep the US's control of the Middle

ISRAELI PRIME minister Binyamin Netanyahu (left) embraces Joe Biden

WHY THE US BACKS ISRAEL

The US sometimes poses as a friend of Palestinians—but will never end its support for Israel. Sophie Squire explains what's behind their relationship

Arthur Balfour

East stable. That’s why, while the relationship between the US and Israel is still a close one, it is fraught at times.

As Israel extends its occupation of the West Bank and Jerusalem, it shows ever more clearly that the two-state solution is a lie.

This tension was shown in 2017, for instance, when US foreign secretary John Kerry criticised Israel’s settlement-building program in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

One thing the Democratic Party in the US now has to worry about is growing support for Palestinians among ordinary people in the US. This is even reflected inside its own ranks.

In recent years a small number of Democrat senators have voiced their opposition to the close relationship between Israel and the US.

As Israel continued its 11-day assault on Gaza Democrat representative Rashida Tlaib, who is Palestinian, confronted Biden over US complicity in the bloodshed.

Atrocities

She reportedly told him that, “atrocities like bombing schools cannot be tolerated, much less conducted with US supplied weapons.”

Representatives Ilhan Omar and André Carson signed a joint statement asking Biden to reconsider the over £2 billion in military aid the US sends to Israel annually.

But those who stand up for Palestine within the Democrats are still in the minority.

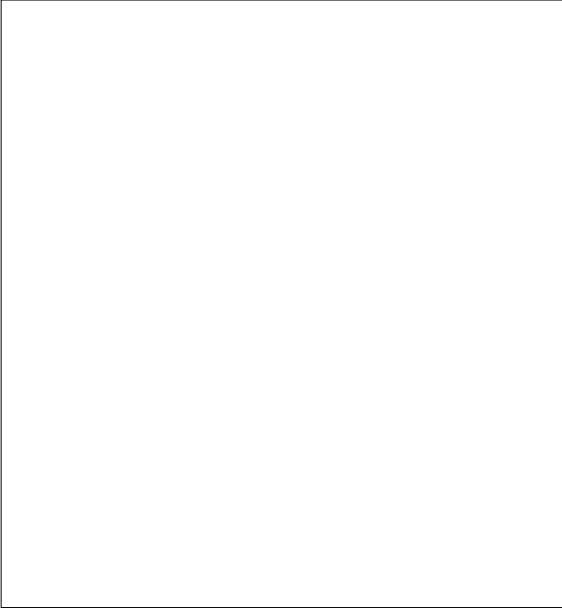
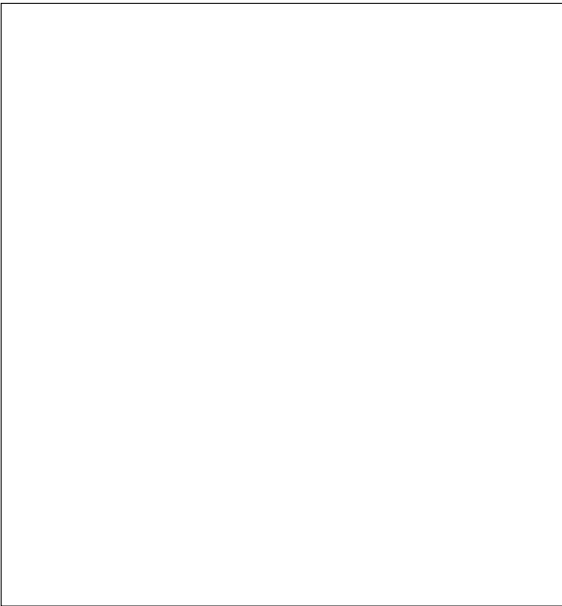
The US still relies on Israel to defend its interests in the Middle East, and even “progressives” inside the Democrats are committed to this.

Senator Bernie Sanders recently said that supporters of Palestinians should “tone down” their language and stop calling Israel an apartheid state.

The even bigger threat to the US is that Palestinian resistance could erupt again, spreading across the Middle East, threatening the rulers of Arab states that are its allies.

So now the US is trying to contain this by funnelling Gaza’s aid through the PA, in an attempt to sideline the resistance group Hamas that governs the Gaza Strip.

“We will do this in full partnership with the Palestinian Authority—not Hamas—in a manner that does not permit Hamas to simply restock its



ISRAELI soldiers in Jerusalem after beating the Jordanian army—proving Israel’s usefulness to the US (top) Protests in solidarity with Palestinians spread across the Middle East last month—including this one in Jordan (above)

military arsenal,” said Biden. But the new wave of revolt that sprung up in Palestine is under in Hamas’ control.

The protests and strikes in Palestine in the last few weeks started as resistance to attempted evictions of Palestinian families in Jerusalem.

That revolt shook Israel, worried the US’s Arab allies, and so worried the US too.

It caused cracks in the close relationship the US has tried to build between them. That’s ultimately why the US intervened to stop Israel’s assault on Gaza.

More protests and resistance everywhere can start to prise those cracks open, and end the relationship between the US and Israel that underpins Palestinians’ oppression.



Fear of resistance behind military takeover in Mali

For the second time in nine months, the military has removed Mali’s government. Charlie Kimber says their fear of the street is palpable

THE PRESIDENT and prime minister of Mali in West Africa have been ousted by the army officer who led a military coup last year.

Colonel Assimi Goita headed the movement last August to remove the repressive and corrupt leader Ibrahim Boubacar Keita.

The military then installed president Bah Ndaw and prime minister Moctar Ouane. But the soldiers remained in charge.

When they tried to appoint new cabinet ministers without asking the military, Goita whipped Ndaw and Ouane from office and detained them in a military base.

They were released after several days when they said they had agreed to resign.

Behind all the manoeuvres at the top is the rulers’ fear of resistance from below.

Goita admitted this openly by saying that the government had presided over “a general consternation marked by the persistence of strikes”.

He added the outcome was “ultimately an unlimited strike resulting in a real asphyxiation of the Malian economy.”

Paralysed

On 17 May the National Union of the Workers of Mali (UNTM) called a nationwide five-day strike in a country of 20 million people.

It demanded pay rises, an extra 20,000 jobs in the civil service and other improvements for workers.

The strike was hugely successful, shutting banks and public services across the nation.

It also hit parts of the gold and other mining industries which are Mali’s largest export. The union reported, “The country is literally paralysed.”

It said that 96 percent of workers called out

COPS HARASSING a student sit-in during the recent strikes

had taken part in the capital Bamako and even more in other regions.

A further strike was due to follow, and union leaders announced plans to escalate to indefinite action.

Then came Goita’s coup. He accused both Ndaw and Ouane of trying to disrupt Mali’s transition to democracy.

With politics in turmoil, it was an ideal time for workers to redouble their fight and impose their solutions.

Instead, the UNTM leaders showed their criminally narrow focus.

They said they couldn’t strike because there was nobody to negotiate with.

UNTM general secretary Yacouba Katilé said, “As of today, we have no contact. Given this situation, we have decided not to further penalise our activists and the population in general.”

But it’s guaranteed that without workers’ struggle and mobilisations in the streets there will be a lot of “penalising of activists and the population in general”.

The imperial powers,

“Behind the manoeuvres at the top is rulers’ fear of resistance

principally the former colonial ruler France, are in chaos about what to do next.

They aren’t completely sure who will be in office in the next few months, let alone in the longer term.

The French government condemned what it called “a coup within a coup”

Democracy

But these events underline that its years of military intervention—and brutal treatment of the population—have never been about democracy.

Instead, the real concern is maintaining its economic, military and geopolitical influence in the region.

It wants to beat back competition from the United States, China and Russia.

France also seeks to exploit crucial resources. Around 70 percent of French electricity is generated by nuclear power, the highest figure in the world. It relies on uranium extraction in the region.

Mali’s Taoudeni Basin, a massive oilfield that stretches 600 miles from Mauritania across Mali and into Algeria, is very important for French oil giant Total.

And Mali is Africa’s third largest gold producer, its industry is riddled with British, South African and other multinationals.

The strikes of the last few weeks have shown the potential for ordinary people to fight for a new life.

It would be one free from imperialist forces, the Malian rich and the military.

READ MORE

● **Palestine—Resistance, Revolution and the Struggle for Freedom**
by Anne Alexander, John Rose, Phil Marfleet and Tom Hickey
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● **Israel—The Hijack State**
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Hillsborough trial end is ‘indictment of system’

by ISABEL RINGROSE

THE TRIAL of two retired South Yorkshire Police (SYP) officers and a former solicitor, who amended officers’ statements after the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster, collapsed last week.

There will be no appeal and the trial was stopped before it went in front of a jury.

This means that, despite a previous verdict of unlawful killing, not one police officer has been held to account.

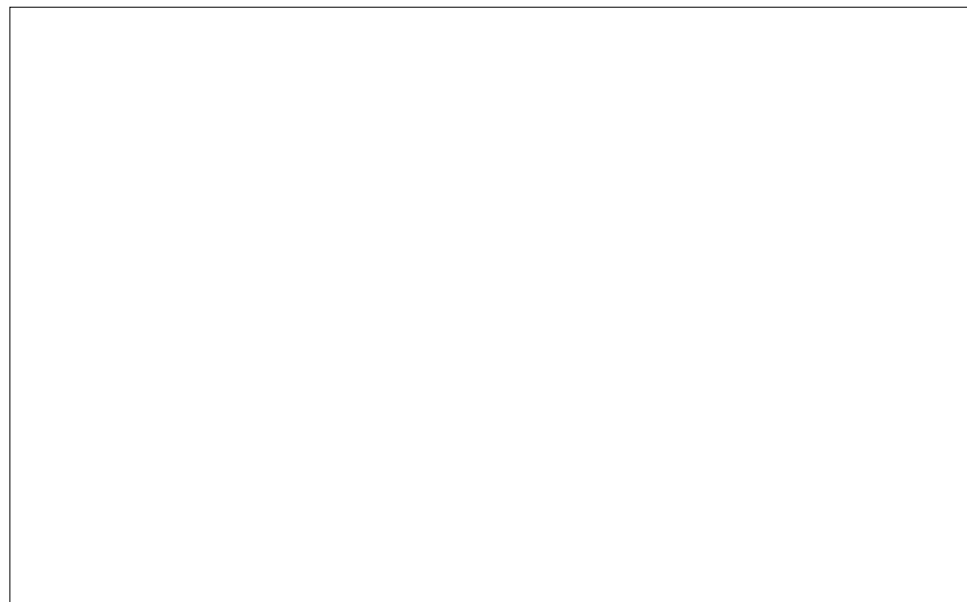
The disaster resulted in the deaths of 96 Liverpool Football Club fans after a crush at Sheffield Wednesday’s football ground on 15 April 1989.

Margaret Aspinall previously chaired the Hillsborough Family Support Group and lost her 18 year old son James in the disaster.

She slammed the trial as a “mockery” and a “farce”.

“Our loved ones went to a football match and were killed, then they and the survivors were branded hooligans,” Margaret said.

“We’ve been put through a 32-year legal nightmare



A MEMORIAL for the 96 fans who died as a result of the 1989 disaster

looking for the truth and accountability.”

A leading Hillsborough justice campaigner also slammed the collapse of a trial as a “cruel indictment of the system”.

Sheila Coleman from the Hillsborough Justice Campaign told Socialist Worker, “We didn’t think it

would end this way with it collapsing.

“But we didn’t hold any hope of guilty verdicts, especially after the big players got off.

“I always had the feeling that getting the unlawful killing verdict at the new inquest in 2016 was as much as we were ever going to get.”

She added, “The authorities have only made things difficult for the families,

“But those families got on with the fight for justice. No matter how difficult it was, they turned up. What’s happened now is a kick in the teeth, but we’ve had many.”

During the trial, Jonathan Goldberg, a lawyer for the

defence, asked if the police felt the disaster had been caused by “drunk, ticketless, rioting fans”.

Sheila is angry that he “felt at liberty” to ask such questions when “the unlawful killing verdict was brought out by the inquests”.

“Survivors are still being blamed for the disaster,” she said.

“We’ll look out for people and still offer support where we can.”

Despite the verdict of unlawful killing in 2016, not one police officer has been held to account.

Derailing

And, during the years the proceedings have gone on, many relatives and survivors felt they could not speak out for fear of derailing cases.

“It makes me angry,” Sheila explained. “The attorney general’s ruling said we couldn’t speak out in case we prejudice forthcoming proceedings.

“They have silenced us into oblivion—or at least they think they have.

“The important thing is the activists in the Hillsborough

Justice Campaign aren’t going anywhere. We will continue to support anyone who suffers an injustice. The Grenfell justice campaign has our full support.

“The people who march every January over Bloody Sunday—we show them solidarity.

“And we’ll support families fighting deaths of black people in police custody. We will continue to do that.”

Sheila said the campaigners “can inspire others to carry on, and give help and assistance”.

Over the years Hillsborough activists have “formed allies and friendships with other campaign groups” and recognise the “formulaic” way justice cases work.

“It might appear like we’re disparate groups, but we find common ground.

“In the main, we come together over miscarriages of justice, and working class people’s miscarriages of justice,” Sheila explained.

“We come together, and all look out for one another.

“We feel their pain and they feel ours—the establishment will never understand that.”

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The NHS will allow businesses full access to your health data

NHS England is opening up patients' medical records for sale to corporations—including Big Pharma. **Sam Ord** looks at how our data is being collated and shared for reasons of profit

NHS ENGLAND disgracefully plans to share every patient's medical histories with third parties from 1 July.

Data will be collected by NHS Digital, which runs the health service's IT system. And it will be available for academic and commercial bodies to access.

NHS Digital publishes a monthly list of who it shares its data with. But "opaque" NHS commercial relationships make it harder to track where data goes.

Cori Crider, co-founder of campaign group Foxglove, said the NHS is "completely silent" on who would be given access to the new data.

"Is it pharma companies? The health arm of Google Deepmind? If you ask patients whether they want details of their fertility treatment or abortion, or results of their colonoscopy shared with those companies, they're not going to want that," she said.

Referred

The data of some 55 million people will include details of sexual health, as well as physical and mental health and criminal records.

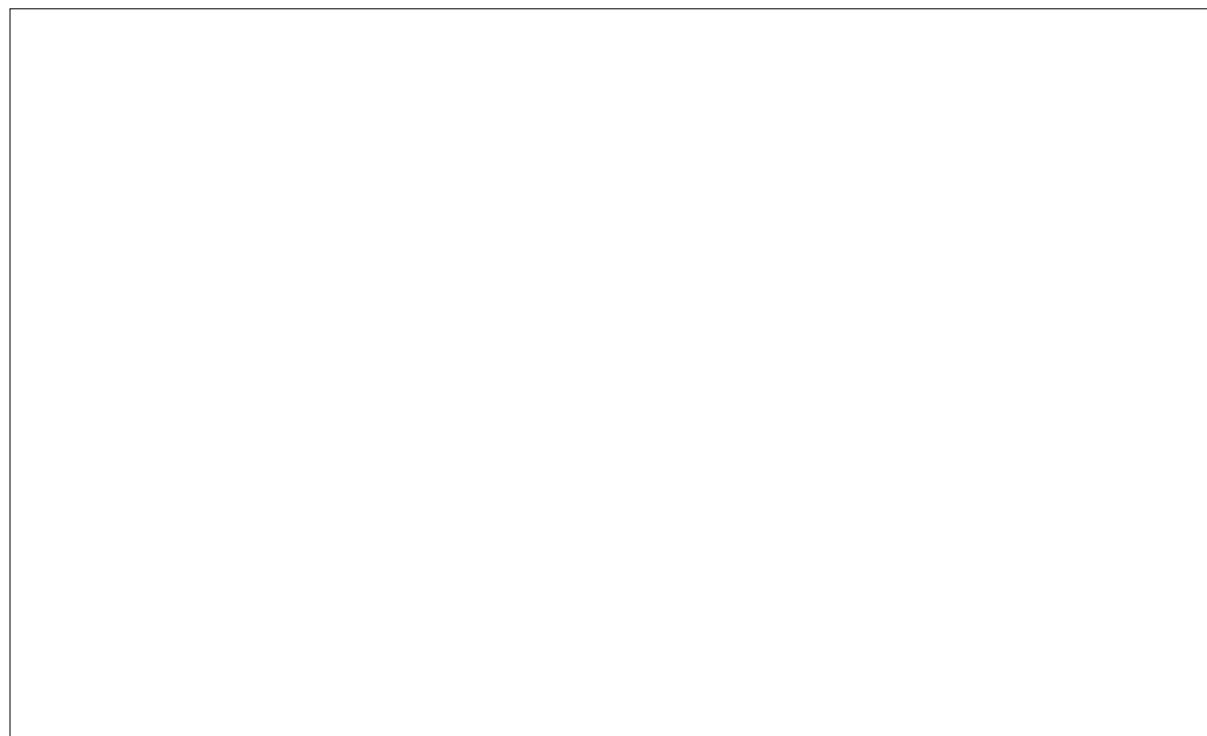
Being able to opt out of having personal data shared will be a challenge for many.

Opting out means filling out a form and taking it to a local GP before 23 June.

Missing the deadline means you can only stop future data from being added to the system.

Although data is supposed to be anonymised, the NHS will have secret "codes" to unlock identities if there is a "valid legal reason".

Foxglove has questioned the plan's legality under data protection



EVERY NHS England patient will lose privacy of their data by 1 July

laws—and on the limited time available to opt out of the proposals. And the MedConfidential group said, "If you do not act based on web pages on the NHS digital site and some YouTube videos and a few tweets, your entire GP history could have been scraped, never to be deleted."

This is the second attempt at putting GP records on a central database. In 2013 the Care.data programme planned to scrape patient records.

Plans were abandoned in 2016 after confidentiality complaints.

The latest scandal highlights the intrusiveness of wide scale data

collection and handling. Valid research does need to look at health data. But firstly there is the issue of consent.

People should be willing participants in data collection and its use for medical research.

But that isn't happening here. As a result, people's trust in the NHS could be affected.

This could cause serious damage to other programmes the NHS is rolling out.

The second factor is the secrecy of the data handling. A lot of the sharing and analysing of data is done behind closed doors.

If the systems storing the data aren't fully secure, breaches are bound to happen.

In 2011 over 4.5 million users of the American health care programme Tricare had patients' data stolen due to an employee error.

And in the US last year, 155.8 million individuals were affected by data breaches.

Digital data collection can present new avenues for researchers to develop beneficial technologies.

But transparency is essential to maintain trust and safeguard people's personal information.

Data for government crackdowns

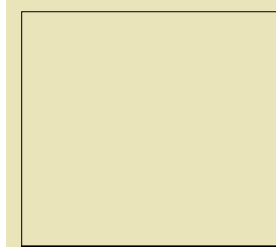
AUTHORITARIAN governments can systematically oppress using data collection.

China uses an army of security personnel to compel ethnic minorities to submit data, such as the Uyghurs in Xinjiang province.

A system developed by the China Electronics Technology Corporation (CETC) is used to monitor and predict people's behaviour patterns, to suppress protests.

A CETC engineer said the programme's intentions were to, "Apply the ideas of military cyber systems to civilian public security."

This system is part of the racist crackdown on Muslims, which has



Uyghur protest

resulted in up to one million Uyghurs locked in internment camps.

Data surveillance is not exclusive to China.

In 2009 it was revealed that the British police had a huge database of protesters' personal information including photographs, names and videos from demonstrations.

Many had never been arrested or charged.

The database was claimed to be used to catalogue criminal intelligence.

Police forces freely exchanged this data among themselves so they could monitor who was attending protests.

Companies' tailored ads use collated data to make a profit

THE PRIMARY business objective of many leading tech companies increasingly is harvesting, analysing and selling the personal data of their users on a mass scale.

Free online services such as Google and Facebook come at a cost to the users' privacy.

Google successfully extracted data from web searches, social media likes, emails and more.

This was to monitor online behaviour to personalise adverts and content.

As more online platforms rushed to sell their users' data, its collection expanded into more intrusive techniques.

Smart cars, household appliances, gas and electric meters and more collect, use and sell user information to third parties.

This could see, for instance, the data of how someone drives sold to insurance companies to hike up prices.

Certain apps and platforms can also gather data, sometimes even when they're not being actively used.

With access to real time location, marketers can tailor ads to prompt you to visit nearby businesses.

Location information can also be stored to monitor

where you're likely to spend your money.

The state also uses data collection to its advantage.

Lawyers representing victims in the ongoing undercover policing inquiry say groups, such as Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion, shouldn't assume their data is secure.

Groups defined as "oppositional" have always been under surveillance by the authorities.

This is the latest method.

In 2013, 12 US National Security Agency employees were caught using government surveillance programmes to

infiltrate emails and calls of their former partners.

We cannot simply opt out of using sites such as Facebook as a way to end data collection.

The competitive nature of capitalism will see another firm take its place.

And social media is an important tool, especially during the global coronavirus pandemic when it kept people connected globally during mass movements.

But we should not shy away from fighting the infringement of people's personal information. It's right not to trust companies' data collection systems.

Sharon Graham—‘It’s time to get back to the workplaces’

Candidate for the Unite union general secretary **Sharon Graham** writes for *Socialist Worker* on why she is standing in the election

IT’S TIME for change. It’s time to build.

The politicians have failed. Job losses are racking up. Emboldened employers are continuing the race to the bottom. New tactics such as fire and rehire remain legal, and the floor keeps dropping.

But despite all of this, our members at Go North West have shown that direct action combined with a Union campaign to lever the boss, can win against the odds.

Defeating fire and rehire is no easy thing and lessons must be learnt. Over the last ten years I have developed a new comprehensive approach to campaigns. It is called Unite Leverage, and it delivers.

I have led with Leverage 13 times and on each occasion we have won better deals by fighting with workers. It is not a replacement for collective action—far from it—it is a way to make action even more powerful.

Trade unions now have a choice. We can put all our eggs in the Westminster basket, or we can take the bull by the horns and do something ourselves. This means change.

The days of tinkering around the edges are over. Collective bargaining coverage continues to decline, Unions have practically no influence in half of the economy and we remain wedded to 100 year old structures.

Branch

The elephant in the room is not which Labour faction leadership candidates are supporting but the lack of any plan to change from within. We are more than a branch of the Labour Party. New TV channels are window dressing.

If we are going to organise global employers such as Amazon, and unionise industries such as hospitality, then we need fundamental change.

When our predecessors put structures in place over 100 years ago, the scope of firms was nothing as compared to now.

Most major employers were still regional players, not global conglomerates as many are today.

In the 21st century you cannot organise workers place by place. Nor can you keep winning in one worksite when you are dealing with a company controlled by a head office thousands of miles away.

The site manager doesn’t decide the big issues. The CEO does. Thanks to privatisation and outsourcing, this is now increasingly the case in the public sector too. The only way trade

BACK STORY

In her first campaign video, Graham said, “Our power is rooted in the workplace—that’s how we win”

● She added that “when it’s time to take on companies like Amazon, the prime minister won’t stand up to Jeff Bezos—we will”

● And she vowed to ensure “workers do not pay the price of the pandemic”

● Graham worked to develop and continues to lead Unite’s organising and leverage department

unions can win at the workplace is to have a coherent bargaining strategy that coordinates our industrial power across employers and industries. And one that doesn’t put administrative roadblocks in the way.

The only way trade unions can stop the undercutting of pay and conditions is to organise industries with some of the worst practices such as hospitality and construction.

We can only do this by delivering campaigns across the whole Union that target every workplace of any employer. Not hotchpotch recruitment delivered in a myriad of different ways and dependent on the support of swathes of different layers of bureaucracy. We have done that and it has failed.

Barrel

Many candidates are talking about “decentralising” the union. It sounds great, but in reality it means little more than pork barrel politics. And worse than that, it would support the type of scatter gun bargaining that does little more than play the gaffers’ game.

If we are talking about disbursing power then we should apply this to some of our political decision making within different nations and take into account devolution.

We cannot create power by hoisting regional barriers to more effective bargaining or breaking up winning strategies that have been proven to defend jobs.

It is clear to me that we must look beyond the internal struggles of the Labour Party. We need to get back to building power by organising in our communities and most importantly by delivering on jobs, pay and conditions. It’s time to get back to the workplace. It is time to build.

Sharon Graham is standing for general secretary of the Unite union

Workers need politics outside Labour

SOCIALIST WORKER is supporting Sharon Graham’s election campaign. But there are some issues it is important to raise at the same time.

There needs to be a complete break from the failures of union leaders to match the scale of the assault that workers face.

Fire and rehire cannot be dealt with by negotiating deals that make concessions to the bosses’ assaults.

Instead, there needs to be outright opposition.

Graham’s campaign slogan “Let’s get back to the workplace” could be a militant call to support workers’ action.

But the slogan may also result in a retreat from wider political struggles, with a focus purely on economic fights by workers.

Challenging the politics of Labour leader Keir Starmer is going to be crucial.

And there must be a real focus on political issues such as anti-racism, the rights of migrant workers, climate change, police powers and Palestine.

The unions need to take up questions of exploitation and oppression that not only affect those at the bottom of society the most, but are used to divide and oppress.

Insisting on breaking down

the traditional divide in the British labour movement between politics and economics must be a priority for socialists.

● For full details of the campaign go to sharongraham.org

● The nomination period continues until 7 June

● Deadline for receipt of nominations is Wednesday 9 June at noon

● Voting papers dispatched from 5 July 2021

● Deadline for voting papers to be returned to the Independent Scrutineer is 23 August at noon

● Declaration of results is Thursday 26 August

UNIVERSITIES

Striker argues why it's right to picket

by A LIVERPOOL UCU STRIKER

UCU UNION members at the University of Liverpool continued to strike this week to stop the compulsory redundancies of staff in our Health and Life Sciences faculty.

The strike was set to run until Friday this week and then start again next week from 7 to 11 June.

This is the first time we have struck during the pandemic, and the strike has raised questions about how to take industrial action most effectively.

Given that a lot of university work is still being carried out from home, one question is, should we picket or not?

Having spent a couple of days on campus this week, I would say the answer is definitely yes.

There are four main targets when it comes to picketing—the first being that students that are coming onto campus for exams.

Picketing gives us an opportunity to tell them why we are striking, and counter the one-sided narrative they get from university bosses.



STRIKERS HELD a rally last week

PICTURE: UCU UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

When they know why we are taking action, their instinct is usually to support us.

It is also important for us to picket due to the members of other unions, especially Unite and Unison, who are not on strike.

If they have the opportunity to talk to us about our action, they can feel part of it, and ensure our work isn't carried out by others while we strike.

Of course another important target is members

of staff who should be in UCU and who should be on strike but feel under pressure to come into work.

Many of these people need to see an active picket line in order to hear our argument. In the past we have recruited lots of people to the strike by having picket lines. If we don't picket, we will not get this chance.

And lastly we must show university bosses that we are actively on strike, and the

campus belongs to us, not them.

Our experiences of talking to students and staff show that pickets raise the confidence of strikers, and build support.

We'll be there every day to maximise our impact and show that we are serious about winning this dispute.

● Send messages of support to laut@liverpool.ac.uk and donate to the strike fund bit.ly/UCUlivestrikefund

PROPERTY SERVICES



Protesting last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Stop sackings for striking

AROUND 80 trade unionists showed their solid support on Tuesday last week for the Goodlord strikers who have been fired.

Bosses at the property services firm in London ruthlessly sacked workers from their referencing department for striking against fire and rehire plans.

The original contracts for around half of the striking workers expired during the strike.

The remaining half of the workers voted to continue striking in a further ballot that closed on 26 April.

All nine workers have now been dismissed, despite

talks between the bosses, Acas and union officials.

Striker Tahmid told Socialist Worker his relationship with the company was "toxic".

"We've been cut off and fired in the middle of a pandemic with no other source of income."

Tahmid added, "The unfair dismissal isn't about them not having the money—it's about image. They don't want to look weak, they're stubborn and care about ego and pride."

● Tweet messages of support to [@unitelondonitc](https://twitter.com/unitelondonitc)
● Full report at bit.ly/GoodlordSacked

CIVIL SERVICE

More strikes at the DVLA

WORKERS AT the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea have called two more strikes set to take place later this month.

Members of the PCS union at the DVLA have already struck twice over unsafe working conditions.

They demanded that more of them be allowed to work from home after major outbreaks of coronavirus at the site.

The PCS union says it is close to agreeing a deal that it can ask its members to vote on in a ballot.

But it says it has called more action to keep up the pressure on bosses.

■ A consultative strike ballot of jobcentre workers was set to end on Wednesday of this week.

The PCS union is asking its members who work in jobcentres whether they would be prepared to strike against government attempts to drive them back into offices.

The Tories want to return to face-to-face interviews in order to restart the sanctions regime against claimants.

This would mean vulnerable and disabled claimants still at risk from the virus face harsh punishments if they can't attend interviews.

SCHOOLS

Strikes win reinstatement

VICTIMISED NEU union rep Kirstie Paton has been reinstated following strikes at John Roan School in Greenwich, south London.

She was facing unfair dismissal after using a trade union social media account to express concerns about the reliability of lateral flow tests.

The strike gained support from parents and students and resulted in a victory, overturning the bosses' accusations.

■ NEU UNION members at City and Islington sixth form in north London, walked out for three days last week in opposition to an increased workload.

Staff have been asked by management to work an additional 13 evenings interviewing potential students.

The college, which enrols over 12,000 students, has threatened

not to pay striking staff the recommended pay award.

■ STAFF AT Moulsecoomb Primary School in Brighton are fighting against the school being taken over by Pioneer Academy.

GMB, Unison and NEU union members are set to strike on Tuesday 15 June.

Previous picket lines in April were attended by students, parents and teachers.

Parents continue to support the strike.

The council has estimated the minimum cost of converting Moulsecoomb Primary into an academy is £209,000. Staff and parents are calling on Pioneer to withdraw.

■ TEACHERS AT Tendring Technology College in Essex have pledged to continue fighting despite academy bosses pausing a planned restructure.

FIRE AND REHIRE

Two fights on fire & rehire

ENGINEERS employed by Brush Electrical Machines, in Ashby de-la Zouch, Leicestershire, are striking against bosses' fire and rehire plans.

The 30 Unite union members began strikes on 25 May and plan to continue until 16 August.

Fire and rehire plans include reductions to overtime rates, allowances, holidays and other terms and conditions.

They will result in a pay cut of between £10,000 and £15,000 a year.

Workers are particularly angry as they were required to travel across Britain during the pandemic.

■ WORKERS AT coffee giant Jacobs Douwe Egberts in Banbury, Oxfordshire, struck from Wednesday to Saturday last week against major fire and rehire attacks.

HEALTH WORKERS' PAY

Battles for NHS justice

HEALTH WORKERS in Scotland campaigning for a decent pay rise were set to march on the Edinburgh parliament this Saturday.

The SNP-led Scottish government has this year offered a measly 4 percent rise.

The nurses' RCN union has rejected the offer and says it remains committed to fighting for more.

Unison union leaders persuaded their members to accept.

The NHS Workers for Fair Pay group is demanding a 15 percent rise for all health workers. It is calling for supporters to assemble at the Edinburgh Castle Esplanade on Saturday 5 June, at 11.30am.

■ NHS campaigners across Britain are set to organise protests on the health service's 73rd birthday, Saturday 3 July.

ROUND-UP

■ STRIKERS AT the glass bottle firm Encirc in Cheshire have won an improved pay offer. This follows three days of strikes in May.

More than 170 workers in the Unite union struck over flexible working practices. These led to reduced pay rises, loss of flexibility over annual leave and staff cuts.

Workers have voted in favour of a deal.

■ WORKERS AT Bromley Central Library are set to strike over plans to stay open later at night with fewer staff.

Strikes are set to begin on Monday 14 June and take place every day from 6pm.

The 17 Unite union members voted unanimously for strikes.

■ PEOPLE WHO live in boats on canals are preparing for protests.

The Canal and River Trust (CRT) has been planning to remove up to 550 mooring spaces between Hackney and Tottenham in London and in Broxbourne on the River Lea.

This is on the basis of spurious safety measures and has sparked two very successful protests. CRT has now put the scheme on hold for a half-baked consultation.

But the campaign continues. The next action will be a flotilla and parade on Sunday 13 June from Walthamstow marshes in east London (opposite the Hope and Anchor) starting at 11am.

● For more information, go to bit.ly/BoatsProtests

ISRAEL CONTINUES TO TERRORISE PALESTINE

As Palestinians face severe repression, the threat of a fightback still scares the Israeli leaders. Nick Clark looks at the scale of the crackdown and explains the Israeli political crisis

ISRAELI STATE forces are driving through a wave of repression in a bid to suffocate Palestinian resistance.

It comes as Israeli politicians conspired to kick out prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu in the wake of the Palestinian revolt.

Militarised Israeli cops have arrested more than 1,000 Palestinians in cities inside Israel's borders in a crackdown following a wave of revolt last month.

And occupation forces are terrorising the streets of the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

Israeli cops arrested hundreds of people, targeting Palestinian neighbourhoods inside Israel last week.

It comes after Palestinian citizens of Israel took part in a general strike, and fought back against Zionist attacks.

In the West Bank, which is under military occupation, Israeli soldiers have killed almost 30 Palestinians since 10 May, during a wave of protests.

And in east Jerusalem riot cops patrol the streets, firing

BACK STORY

Palestinians rose up on 6 May to oppose Israel evicting Palestinian families from their homes in the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah.

● In response Israel heavily bombed Gaza, stormed the Al-Asqa Mosque and arrested Palestinian protesters

● In Gaza 256 people were killed and 2,000 wounded. In the West Bank 26 Palestinians were killed and over 500 were injured

● The uprising, which lasted 15 days, ended after a ceasefire was called. But the occupation, land grabs and the siege of Gaza continue



ISRAEL DEFENCE Forces armoured vehicles monitor protesters in the West Bank

tear gas and crowd control bullets at people.

Footage shows police shot a Palestinian teenager in the back, before throwing a stun grenade at her as she lay on the ground.

The repression comes

after Palestinians rose up in Jerusalem and the West Bank last month.

It is the crucial context to Israeli politicians' bid to get rid of Netanyahu.

Israel is in a long-running political crisis and has had

four elections in the last two years.

All mainstream Israeli parties agree that they will never allow Palestinians to have a state.

But they don't want to live with the Palestinians they

keep under occupation.

Netanyahu has survived 12 years as prime minister by championing the repression of Palestinians.

But now, the Palestinian revolt, and Israel's failure to defeat resistance group

Hamas, mean right wing Israelis no longer trust Netanyahu.

And so-called "centre-ground" politicians don't think he can get on with US president Joe Biden, which Israel depends on.

Cobble

Politicians were trying to cobble together an anti-Netanyahu coalition as Socialist Worker went to press.

Their government would be led by far right Naftali Bennett who champions severe repression of Palestinians.

Yet the Israeli state still fears Palestinian resistance.

Last week it postponed a legal ruling on whether to evict Palestinian families in a Jerusalem neighbourhood.

Similar eviction attempts sparked last month's revolt.

It's a sign that increased repression could spark yet more Palestinian resistance.

More on line

For more on Palestine, go to socialistworker.co.uk

Hamas sides with Syrian dictator al-Assad

PALESTINIAN resistance group Hamas, which governs in the Gaza Strip, has shown signs of reconciliation with Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad.

It comes as other Arab states, backed by the US, work to exclude it from the "reconstruction" of Gaza after Israel's devastating assault last month.

Hamas was forced to denounce Assad in 2012 after the regime bombed Palestinian refugee camps in Syria as part of the drive to crush the Syrian Revolution.



Syrian president Bashar al-Assad

But now Assad has praised Hamas's resilience against Israel.

Hamas wants to use resistance against Israel to increase its influence

among Arab rulers. But this means siding with dictators that have massacred both their own people and Palestinians.

Palestine protests continue in Britain

THERE WERE more protests across Britain in solidarity with Palestinians last weekend, more than a week after Israel's assault on Gaza ended.

Many of the demonstrations were not called by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, which organised the huge demonstrations in London last month.

At least 2,000 people marched in Birmingham on Saturday. Hope, an activist in Birmingham, told Socialist Worker, "It was incredible, it completely dominated the city centre."

Hope added that many of the people

on the protest said it was important to keep taking action despite the ceasefire.

"People are angry that nothing changes and then every few years Israel attacks Gaza again.

"They don't want to go back to the same thing," Hope added.

Hundreds

Other protests took place in cities and towns including Manchester, Stoke, Oxford, Wigan, Haverfordwest, Luton, Liverpool, Maidenhead and Sheffield.

Hundreds of people came out last week to defend activists who had

occupied an Israeli arms factory near Leicester.

Campaigners from Palestine Action sat on the roof of the Elbit arms factory—an Israeli drone manufacturer—for six days.

Cops made at least ten arrests as hundreds protested at the gates in support of the action.

The continuing protests show people want to keep taking action in solidarity with Palestine—and to target Britain's support of Israel.

The momentum of the mass demonstrations last month shouldn't be squandered. More should be called.